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Owen F. Clark

BORN OF THE CRUCIBLE

Born of the Crucible

BY

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TO MY WIFE

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CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	WHERE THE SKY BEGINS	1
II	THE NEW BAGDAD	6
III	MEN OF DREAMS	13
IV	INTO THE DEPTHS	19
V	SHOES AND SOCIALISM	28
VI	CRESCENDOES	38
VII	DANGER SIGNS	53
VIII	THE GOPHER HOLE	64
IX	WITHIN THE GATES	79
X	STORM CLOUDS	84
XI	THE GIRL OF THE TRAIN	95
XII	DOLDRUMS	114
XIII	THE TEMPEST	118
XIV	WILLIAMS	130
XV	THE MOUNTAINS SUMMON	140
XVI	THE SLIP ON THE DIKE	147
XVII	THE RETURN	157
XVIII	THE REAL THARNY	170
XIX	PADDY SKIFF	178
XX	THE SCHEMERS	189
XXI	THE UNKINDEST CUT	200
XXII	CLEARING THE SLATE	205
XXIII	IN SPRINGTIME	220
XXIV	THE M. N.	228
XXV	SACRED PRECINCTS	246
XXVI	THARNEY GOES FISHING	258
XXVII	THE ARROW	266
XXVIII	THE FIGHT IN THE GLEN	283
XXIX	DREAMS AND THE GIRL	293
XXX	CRUNCH PAYS	303
XXXI	MARY	312

BORN OF THE CRUCIBLE

CHAPTER I

WHERE THE SKY BEGINS

While still in his third year at Stanford University, Dan Bradshaw, quite inadvertently, had stumbled upon a piece of rather startling information—facts that were not only startling, but disconcerting and disturbing.

Always had he lived with his Aunt Ruth and his Uncle Sim in a beautiful little California village. They had brought him up from childhood; they had clothed him and taken care of him; when he had been old enough, they had sent him to school; and later, by the utmost economy, they had saved enough to send him to college.

And then suddenly, Dan had learned that these good people were not related to him at all. Merely, out of the kindness of their hearts, they had taken him in, when he had been left an orphan. Dan's mother had died not long after she had heard the hearty wail of her first-born. His father had met with an unfortunate accident, but a few weeks before.

Of course, Dan had reasoned, as soon as he had learned the true status of his 'uncle' and 'aunt', it was impossible for him to continue taking more from them. True, he could never begin to repay them in money for all their great care and wonderful kindness, but at least he could cease being a burden. And then, neither of his foster-parents was young any more; they were reaching the twilight of their lives, and the maintaining of a gen-

eral country store would soon become too arduous a task for 'Uncle' Sim.

Abruptly Dan had terminated his college career. Immediately he would fare forth in the quest of some means whereby he could begin to repay his benefactors' generosity.

Came then for Dan Bradshaw the call of the east. There he had hoped to come upon the road to fame and fortune, but such a road is as difficult to locate as it is to traverse, and Dan had not found things easy. And while his keen enthusiasm and his love of adventure had not been quelled, Dan had discovered many sharp corners in those first few years against which to bruise his head.

Then had come the time when he had heard and listened to the lure of the great West—the same lure which had summoned his grandparents in the days of the California gold rush. He had been unable to resist this call that promised so much of great open spaces, of vast mountains, and above all, of adventure.

And so it was that Dan Bradshaw had boarded the tourist sleeper of the train at Chicago, that was now taking him to his new western destination.

At a little station where the train halted for a few minutes, Dan got out and walked up and down the platform. From the step of a Pullman he saw a girl jump lightly down. Hatless, but with a traveling coat about her shoulders, the girl turned laughingly to urge a middle-aged woman to descend. But the latter protested.

"Now, Miss Mary, do be careful," she said anxiously. "The train may start any moment."

But laughingly the girl continued her urging. "Come on, Jane—the fresh air will do you good."

There was that in the quality of the girl's voice that attracted Bradshaw's attention, and then it was that he

became cognizant of her beauty. In the fleeting moment of looking directly at this slender, smiling girl with a voice of infinite charm, he saw the delicate, pink rose-petal clarity of her coloring, the firmness of her splendidly modeled chin, her slightly retroussé, small nose, and the wave of her brown hair which did not quite conceal her delicately formed ears.

And when the train again was pounding along on its way, Bradshaw, in his tourist sleeper, weaved fanciful day dreams of a girl in a Pullman and wondered if by any kind chance of Fate she, too, were going to Butte, Montana.

It was in the night hours that he drew near his journey's end, but even before the brakeman stuck his head through the doorway of Dan's sleeper and called, "Butte—the next stop!", Bradshaw was aware that the train was gliding down a grade chiseled out along one side of the Great Divide, and was winding down into the world's most famous mining city.

He pressed his face against the window, to get his first glimpse of the city's lights, for he had always believed in first impressions. A swaying of the train suggested a wide curve being rounded, and then, suddenly the night glow of the copper metropolis presented itself. Bradshaw drew a sharp breath and sat up more erect.

Far down the floor of the valley was black-shrouded mystery picked out here and there with tiny points of fire. The pouring of red-hot slag at a smelter dump somewhere off in the center of the valley made a vivid, crimson smear. The encircling mountain ranges seemingly were as black and formless as the star-flecked curtain of night, rising unendingly from behind their sculptured ridges. But northerly, the direction in which the train was heading, and somewhat obliquely from the

window through which Bradshaw gazed, was a wonder sight,—a constellation of twinkling lights that lay like a widespread field of glittering diamonds on a sloping cushion of blackest velvet that, so distance made it appear, would offer but smooth resistance to the hand that might be stretched forth to stroke it. And where that man-made constellation ended and the stars of heaven began their ascent up and away throughout the inverted bowl of the night, no eye of stranger could discern. Then the train rounded another curve and made a steeper plunge along the mountain side. The city's lights disappeared for an interval with surprising sharpness.

Bradshaw sank back in his seat but intent on catching the first recurring view of the wonder sight. The strong line of his jaw relaxed and he smiled slightly to himself.

"I'll put a handful of those diamonds out there in my pocket", he thought aloud.

Dan Bradshaw was in the full vigor of his twenty-six years, with his character as yet in a vitally formative period, and his enthusiasm still unabated. Yet, and he winced slightly at the thought, he had been a drifter, too content perhaps to seek only the adventures of life, and the jewels of success were not garnered that way. Still, he was young; life was good; adventure was alluring and he loved it—a natural heritage from the Indian fighting, pioneering, rugged grandfather of the days of "Forty Nine".

"Be-utte! Be-utte!" exclaimed the brakeman from the doorway.

There came locomotive whistle, mellow-ringing, grinding of brakes and the shrill escape of steam. Then, as the train came to a stop, Dan was standing on the car platform, his bulging, telescope satchel under his arm.

While other passengers were making their way

briskly from the train to the station, Bradshaw stopped for a moment and looked directly up at the crescents and bands and loops of bright lights that crowned "the richest hill on earth" like strings of Brobdingnagian jewels, casually dropped there, and at the electric glows that gemmed the city.

From where the Pullmans stood came a sound of voices, and turning, Dan saw a man conducting two women, Miss Mary and her maid, to a big automobile.

For an instant Bradshaw's jaw set tensely and he fingered the few silver dollars in his trousers' pocket. Then he grinned at the lights whose glittering seemed silently to beckon him.

"Hello there you Butte", he breathed.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW BAGDAD

Within the first week after reaching Butte, Dan Bradshaw made two pertinent discoveries:—that while the mining city fascinated him, if he wanted to remain there he would have to seek employment in the mines, because there was no immediate opening for him in any other line of endeavor, and that he was determined not to acknowledge defeat and leave.

The big-town features of the copper metropolis, its air of ceaseless prosperity, its heterogeneous population, so interwoven in communal interest and yet sharply defined in nationalities and factions, claimed Dan's close attention. He saw that Butte was as different from other places he had visited as was its site. Built on a continuation of a slope of the hill, burrowed with many of the world's greatest copper and zinc mines, it was different from any other municipality he ever had seen.

To describe the city would involve the tremendous task of picturing a physical entity combined with startling, albeit very human emotions of every shade. One may list all the colors in a Persian rug and yet that never would convey the appearance of the rug. Dan thought about all this and finally he came to the conclusion that he had arrived in a modern, western Bagdad,—a place of emphatic contrasts, of ever changing, kaleidoscopic and phantasmagoric thought and action and pur-

pose—a conglomeration of ideals and ideas, (and lack of them too), of many widely different countries and peoples.

A few yards from a barren mine dump stretched a well-kept terraced lawn bordered with flower beds. Back of a handsome home was the gallows-frame of a mine in actual operation. There were no gambling joints, no dance hall hells, no shooting out of lights, no sombrero-topped, red-shirted men in hairy pants riding frantic horses up and down streets and howling maledictions. For verily this was no moving picture version of a western locality. And if gamblers wanted to gamble they did so in some basement with all the trepidation of police raiding and subsequent finings that the most effete eastern community could have demanded.

As for seeking work in the mines, that rather attracted Dan, for it suggested a strong element of romance, and romance was the basis of Dan's adventuresome inclinations.

Every eight hours, fully seven thousand men came off shift from the mines, while a like number went to work. They all surged back and forth through much of the city with free, wide strides, swinging their lunch buckets as emblems of honor. These thousands of men, who daily went down hundreds and even thousands of feet into the earth to delve for copper or zinc ore, were reckless of the dangers that beset them, and yet as they became inured to peril they developed, mostly subconsciously, a certain nervous strain that often found vent in a devil-may-care attitude, in sharp, sudden excitements, in remarkable generosities, in quick resentments of real or imagined personal affronts, in a peculiar sort of rough chivalry, or in an indifference that could be swept aside at a moment's notice.

And men of all sorts were in the mines for various reasons of necessity. Half of the University Club, Dan found, worked in some capacity or other far underground, even as muckers, as the shovelers were called.

Bradshaw quickly came to anchor at Mrs. Inez Harty's boarding house for miners in Working Lane,—a narrow, uneven, steep and, for the most part, shack-bordered street which, surviving from pioneer mining days, was now a connecting link between a considerable portion of the city and a roadway which led to some of the big mines higher up the hill. It was a rough place and a man had to prove himself ninety-nine percent willingness to fight if he hoped to remain there in peace, or even in respected neutrality. The youngsters who played in the Lane's gutters were the final certifiers of status, for when they let the passerby proceed unnoticed, he could rest assured that he had made himself one of the elect. Otherwise he was lucky if he managed to duck the rocks and stones that would be heaved at him.

Standing in front of Carty's saloon at the head of the Lane, Dan could look down on the busy city, and over it, across the broad reach of valley, dotted here and there with houses still in the course of construction, to the marvelous, encircling ranges of the Rockies. And if the city and the valley and the mountains were bathed in sunshine, Working Lane, straggling at the foot of the world's richest hill, was in shadow. But Dan knew that if all manner of men came into the Lane, from out of it had come some mighty people.

As Dan came down the mine road late on the afternoon of the first day he went to get the lay of the land with regard to mine employment offices and how to proceed with reference to them, he saw a big, maroon-colored automobile stalled at the point where the Lane met the

road. The chauffeur was busy with a front tire. A young woman in gray automobile coat and cap, had alighted and strolled to a side of the road from where she was gazing over the city, at the valley and mountains, beyond. As he drew nearer, Dan observed two men whom he had seen loitering in front of Carty's, saunter along the road until they halted between the girl and the machine. They were among the tougher habitués of Working Lane, and when he saw them turn their heads and speak to the girl, Dan quickened his pace. The girl ignored them, while the chauffeur was busily engaged on the other side of the car. Then, as the two toughs stopped and regarded her impudently, the girl turned to walk to the automobile, only to find she would have to step around them to reach it. By that time Dan had come up to the group.

"These fellows are annoying you", he said. Roughly he shouldered the one nearest her aside. "I'll see you to your auto." But as he caught full view of her face, he started in surprise. She was the girl Dan had seen laughingly urge her maid to leave the Pullman and enjoy the fresh air.

After a momentary flash of surprise, for his speech was strongly contrasted with his rough attire, the girl regarded him calmly. For his part, Dan admired her self-possession.

The tough, whom Dan had shoved aside, suddenly lurched forward with clenched fist. But Dan, stepping in close, sent a perfectly timed uppercut to his assailant's jaw, and the fellow went over backwards in a heap. The other man rushed in and threw his arms around Bradshaw's neck from behind, with the evident intention of choking him, but Dan executed a trick well-known to wrestlers,—one which in his collegiate days he had found very effective if worked quickly. Reaching back over one

shoulder with both hands, Dan clasped them behind his attacker's neck and, dropping on a knee, with a jerk of his arms and a heave of his shoulders whirled him over for a flying fall that resulted in a helpless sprawl. The chauffeur came running up, with a wrench gripped in his hand, but the fray was over.

Bradshaw straightened his rumpled clothes as best he could.

"These fellows won't bother you any more", he said, and he thought he detected a glint of smiling amusement in the girl's remarkably clear blue eyes.

Sweetly she thanked him in a low-pitched voice that had the same charming quality that first had attracted Dan.

"I've been up on this road many times", she added, "but I never have been annoyed before."

Then with a smile and ever so slight a nod, she went to her automobile.

Dan took off his cap as the machine started, and once she looked back at him and nodded. He was still standing there with his cap off when the auto rounded a corner and was lost to his view. Then he walked along to Carty's with the two toughs, now entirely recovered, following him. He was standing at the bar talking to Carty, when they entered. Dan turned to survey the pair. The man he had thrown looked rather good-natured, but the other one seemed sullen.

"Say, you two stiffness", Bradshaw said bluntly, "if you ever pull any more of that kind of rough stuff when I'm around, what I just did out there to you won't be a marker to the next dose."

The sullen one scowled at him and made as if to slink to a table at the rear while his companion, rubbing

the back of his neck, regarded Dan with respectful admiration.

Bradshaw beckoned to them.

"Come on now, you two ginks, have something and behave yourselves better in future". Dan placed a coin on the bar.

The two sidled up.

"We didn' mean nawthin'", muttered the sullen one.
"We never said nawthin' tuh her."

"Yeh, we taut we'd see if de loidy wuz in distress", asserted the other. Then he waxed enthusiastic in admiration of Bradshaw. "Say, dat smash on de jaw you give Wilkins wuz some humdinger. An' de way you trew me—say!" He contemplated his companion. "Les see yer jaw Wilkins—it's got a lump on it."

"G'wan", snarled Wilkins, but gingerly he touched the swelling.

Carty pointed at the better-natured one's clothes.

"Better brush yourself off, Snitch," he said, "or ev'rybody'll know where you been." Then briskly: "What'll you have, gents?"

Wilkins drank a glass of beer in silence, but the drink Snitch imbibed soon made him more loquacious.

"Say", he began, addressing Dan, "ain't dat gal got de looks, an' she"— He stopped aware that Bradshaw was regarding him intently, then he grinned sheepishly.

Dan finished his beer. "See you again", he said to Carty as he turned to go.

"Sure," agreed Carty heartily.

As he mopped the bar, Carty regarded Bradshaw through a window of the door. "Some man that—some man!", he exclaimed.

"Too damn fresh", mumbled Wilkins, and reaching over for Dan's glass he drained what was left in it.

Bradshaw went towards his boarding house, his cap pushed to one side of his head, and a smile softening his strong features.

"And now Sir Galahad of Working Lane, you go to your hashery", he mused softly, "and the fair princess goes to her castle. Ambrosia and nectar for her—pork and beans for you!"

CHAPTER III

MEN OF DREAMS

The next day when Bradshaw came down the road from one of the mine employment offices he was frowning, but when he reached the place where he had rebuked the impudence of Wilkins and Snitch a far better mood took possession of him. And forthwith he let his imagination lead him into a pleasant reverie—that had to do with a girl, and matters of great personal success. For verily, he was in a Bagdad, and in Bagdad much of magic might transpire.

Arrived at his boarding house, he found John Walton, a tall, lithe man with the sobered look of one who had seen much, experienced trying vicissitudes and withal had maintained his real manhood, and Paddy Skiff, a grizzled old miner, occupying the bench that stood against the wall beside the wide open door.

Paddy, shrewd, possessed of limitless Celtic wit and with mining experience dating from Virginia City, Nevada, boom times, turned his twinkling eyes on Dan.

"Sit down Lad", he invited hospitably, and as Bradshaw complied he went on. "Wat do ye think of Butte by this time? You'll find it great. One minut ye look at Butte an' it sure do look rough,—maybe tough—an' the nex' minut it looks bee-yu-ti-ful to ye. Ye never kin quite get it. Ye get me? An' people work an' play an' do doggone near everything on the dynamite plan."

Paddy removed his cap and pushed the fingers of a thick, strong hand through his grayed locks, still remarkably wavy and boyish for all his years.

"An' talk of life! Now ye take some mucker that'll come up out of the Benton mine, where I'm tendin' station, and maybe he'll look like he's been dragged through mist an' mud. He washes up, changes his togs, puts on a new tie an' lid an' goes to a show lookin' jus' as importan' an' tony as the banker settin' next to him. Maybe nex' year they run him for the legislachure, er anything else handy, an' he's a big bug in the burg. Maybe nex' year he's tryin' for to clean up a tough saloon—an' bing!—he's in the county jail. Ye never kin tell. Butte's diff'runt from other places. Ye get me?"

"Yes I get you", said Dan gruffly, "I'm getting on to the ways generally, I guess".

"Oh ho!—the lad with a grouch!" remarked Paddy, winking at Walton and then turning to contemplate Dan. "Wat's the matter—ain't ye landed on a job yet?"

Came a moment of silence.

"Not yet—just got a rustling card—a permit to apply for a job", broke out Bradshaw. "I showed up with a bunch of other candidates at a brick office up there on the hill, got to the window and was put through a course of sprouts. And so I got my rustling card—my permit to apply for a job in a mine."

He took the card from his pocket and slapped it against the bench. "Would you call my getting it a good day's work?"

Paddy tapped him on the shoulder. "Yer jus' sore, Lad, fer havin' to stand in line fer a short bit to get a card—fer havin' to give a statement of yerself, an' ye think the systim all wrong. Lissin' me Lad—whatever employin' systim any of the minin' companies in this

camp uses come from a lot of experimintin' they've each done. I've met up with all sorts of workin' conditions an' let me tell ye, the big employin' game ain't one kin be let run wild. Sure, some things could be bettered an' they are bein' bettered right along—not alone here; all over the worl'. But if ye think the rustlin' card gettin' is cause fer soreness, yer all wrong."

"Well, do I look like such a tough one that I've got to give my history?" Bradshaw demanded.

"You've got to take into consideration", put in Walton in his quietly emphatic way, "that no employing company hereabouts is duty bound to treat you as a guest of honor. No mining company here is under any obligation to hire you, and it has a right to know the sort of man you are before you are taken on—whether it is by the card system or some other way. It's merely a matter of business. Men seeking employment in very many other lines of work have to furnish far more strict accounts of themselves, and in cases where they don't have to give any such accounts, you may be sure the employers know their men through some other sources." He paused an instant. "Even though I am a member of the great underground working fraternity of Butte at this time", he continued, "I must admit that the companies have some mighty tough customers to deal with now and then, and the efforts made by all the companies to get the right sort of men is not alone to protect themselves, but to protect the employes too."

But Bradshaw at the moment gave heed only to the vein of stubbornness traversing the granite of his make-up. "The system may have its good points", he conceded, "but", and he thrust out his jaw, "I guess just at this minute I'd like to go haying. May feel differently about

the whole proposition later on. I don't know." He frowned more deeply, looking straight ahead.

"Sure", remarked Paddy as if to himself, "a honest man what means to be on the square, whatever his past has contained as to mixin' up with bad gangs, ain't hesitatin' to tell of himself."

"If you pass muster at the Norton, or the Williston, or the Jameson properties, you don't need a rustling card—if you pass muster", Walton informed Dan.

"Then I'll say that the Norton properties are unanimously chosen to receive my application", declared Bradshaw, and he tore up the card. "Wait a minute for me Walton, while I wash up and I'll go down town with you"; he arose and hastened into the boarding house.

Paddy Skiff shook his head. "The lad's a cliver one all right, an' he'll be heard from—I feel it. But he's a hot-head an' that's mostly 'cause he's young yet", and Paddy sighed. "'Tis me experiunce that a cliver hot-head is always more dangerous than a ignur-runt hot-head."

* * * * *

It was the hour after the changing of shifts and before the closing of business houses. Heavily laden street cars buzzed along, their brazen bells adding to the clamor that seemed greatest at the corner near which Bradshaw and Walton stood until the traffic officer looked in their direction. Then they strolled along the business avenues until finally they took their stand on a step of the public library.

Bradshaw was making some animated comment to Walton when suddenly he paused. He saw a big, maroon-colored automobile stop at the curb across the way, and the girl of the train step into it. In another moment the machine was gliding away and Bradshaw

watched it until it was lost among the press of other vehicles.

Walton, glancing keenly at the younger man, followed the latter's intent gaze.

"A friend of yours?" asked Walton with a bantering note in his tone.

"Not yet", Bradshaw replied, the suggestion of a smile on his lips.

"And that implies?" questioned Walton.

Bradshaw shrugged his shoulders. "Nothing specific", he answered. "Many things happen in Butte, I understand", and he smiled more broadly.

As they continued their stroll, the city was breaking out into its thousands of electric lights, the long rows of street arcs atop their ornamental iron posts shining with a white brilliancy—Butte's night life was getting under way.

At a corner they came across a large group of men clustered about a speaker on an improvised platform of boxes. They stopped at the edge of the crowd which, excepting for the few immediately gathered before the speaker, gave no evidence of sanctioning the utterances of the soap-box orator, a slender man somewhat above medium height, with esthetic cast of face, drooping, graying mustache and dreamy eyes that had a way of glowing now and then, and whose well-modulated voice had a peculiar carrying power. Most of those in his audience were representative of Butte's miners, while a few business men and others loitered there through much the same curiosity that actuated Bradshaw and Walton.

"Who is he?" asked Dan of Walton.

"Cronel is his name", replied Walton. "He's a socialist and the stuff he hands out usually is way over the heads of most of those who stand around listening to

him. It's the idealistic, impractical argument of the socialist scholastics. Wait until some radical duck really talks 'Direct Action' to a few of these fellows some day and see what happens."

"Listen!" said Dan putting his hand on the other's arm. "Get this he's saying."

"We must look to the system which will guarantee the common ownership of the means of production and distribution", intoned the socialist dreamer. "This system, my comrades, implies the result of the application of the theory of evolution to human affairs."

"The usual socialist propaganda", remarked Walton.

Cronel continued. "A proletarian revolution is necessary. To accomplish this wonderful act of universal emancipation is the duty of the modern proletariat."

"What does this fellow do besides speak on corners?" asked Dan as he and Walton moved along.

"He's a hard-working, mild-mannered machinist by day and a preacher of socialism at night", responded Walton. "He thinks he has a mission of education to perform and he's fearfully sincere about it."

"That kind of educating", replied Bradshaw, "is a hell of a thankless job."

CHAPTER IV

INTO THE DEPTHS

It was at the Monticana mine of the Norton properties, always referred to in mining circles as 'The Mont' and among the most famous of the district's great mines for size and excellence of equipment, that Bradshaw secured his first job.

With several hundred other men of various nationalities, Dan, reporting for his first shift, the morning following his being hired, disrobed in the 'Dry', as the change room of the Mont in common with those at the other mines was called, and got into his digging clothes. In the Dry, a well lighted and heated structure with rows of steel lockers and shower baths and zinc-lined wash basins, the men going on shift or coming off would fraternize according to their moods. The carefree individual with the ready laugh whose locker was next to Dan's and who sociably occupied the same bench with him, kept up a somewhat one-sided but well-intentioned running fire of friendly conversation.

"First time down the hole?" he asked.

"Yes", replied Dan.

"Thought so", said the other with a laugh. "I kin spot a new guy as far as I kin lamp him."

When they were almost ready to leave the Dry, his new acquaintance again addressed Dan.

"Say, my name's Jackson."

"Mine's Bradshaw", said Dan, and they shook hands.

"Well, Bradshaw, you'd best take your lunch bucket along. We don't come on top to eat at noon—eatin' time in the mine day or night shifts is always called noon."

Bradshaw hastily returned for his bucket.

"Say", resumed Jackson, as they stood on the landing at the head of the steel steps leading to the ground, "when you're bein' dropped down the shaft an' you feel a pressin' in your ears, put your fingers in 'em an' blow against the eardrums. That'll help a lot. Listen—if you ever get lost underground an' your light's out, feel for the car tracks an' where they join another set of tracks feel which way the switch-points go an' follow that direction along the tracks. You'll get to the station on that level that way. If you're where the 'lectric lights is burnin' watch the wires. They get heavier as you come nearer the station."

Dan thanked him.

"Oh that's all right, Friend", returned Jackson jocularly. "That stuff all helps", and he went clattering down the stairs.

Over the barb-wired red fence that surrounded the Mont mine-yard with its various big mine buildings, huge steel hoist and criss-crossing of trolley tracks, Dan could see many other such red-painted fences enclosing mine-yards, and up and down the side of the hill were many buildings and hoists, those on the summit sharply silhouetted and some of the tall, black smokestacks in close-belted rows like sections of a great pipe-organ. There were many plumes of steam, the hum of great, intricate hoisting engines, the rumble of ore skips and cages, the puffing of locomotives, the thousand and one other notes of work all blending into a diapason that was the very Voice of this world of Labor of which Dan Bradshaw

now had become a part. Under this vigorous industry lay enormous bodies of gray-greenish rock that held the copper and zinc and much of the gold and silver, too, and to delve in the heart of a mighty treasure-trove was to be Dan's work. The romance of it all was uppermost in him, and he was thrilled.

"A man can make good here if he's got it in him", he said to himself. "I'll come up out of the hurly-burly!"

At the foot of the stairs, Dan took his place in the line of men passing through the small office in the corner of the building where a clerk, back of a short counter, was checking off the men, and where another clerk was handing out candles, two to a man. Dan, following the example of the others, placed his candles in his jumper pocket. Some of the men, especially the foremen, shift-bosses, samplers and skinners, went into an adjoining room to charge carbide lamps, the samplers and skinners then fastening theirs to the front of their caps.

On his way to the turn-sheet, a steel-plated floor that leveled the approach to the shaft, Dan glanced through a window of the engine house where the massive hoisting engines were working with clocklike precision and certainty. Their nickeled parts glistened, their brass was burnished, and scarcely a scratch marred the deep black of their frames. They seemed possessed of a human consciousness as if realizing the dependency placed on them by hundreds of men. And magnificently oblivious of the crowd in front of the engine house and under the great steel hoist, and able to distinguish amid the bedlam of noises the merest squeak of the wonderful mechanisms of which they had charge, stood the engineers high on their platforms above their engines, watching dials and listening for signal bells, ready to grasp any of the semi-circle of bright brass controllers or handles of long, black

brake levers before them. Emulating the serious concentration of their chiefs, the oilers and engine wipers went about their work with nonchalant intentness.

There was a reckless good nature manifested in the crowd of miners and muckers waiting to be lowered underground, a rather rapid process, for no ore was hoisted when shifts were going down or coming up, so that now the big ore skips were hanging on the gallows-frame.

Dan felt a hand on his shoulder and, turning, he saw Jackson.

"Who's your shift boss?" asked his new friend.

"Smith".

"Then you're on the eighteen hundred—a good level. I work there, too, so we'll go down together."

The cages had been shooting up and down with unceasing regularity, the men destined for the upper levels going down first. Then came the time for Dan to go below. The station tender raised the iron bar extending across the front of the shaft compartment before which Dan stood, swung open the safety doors of the cage's third and lowest deck, and following Jackson and several others bound for the same level, Dan stepped on. In turn, the middle and top decks were brought level with the turn-sheet and loaded with human freight. There came a staccato of bell taps, the sharp puffing of an engine exhaust, and the cage plunged into the depths. The velocity of its downward rush made Dan catch his breath. Pitch darkness prevailed excepting when a momentary swish came in the rumbling of the cage against the guides and a streak of light, shining through the jointure of the double iron doors of a level, flashed by. That occurred every hundred feet, so Jackson told him, and Dan, clenching his teeth, mentally noted that

he never had progressed at such a speed. It seemed to him that the cage must have dropped a great distance when, to his startled amazement, the deck which he had boarded appeared to be falling away from him, but quickly he sensed the cage bottom and realized he actually was on it. Suddenly the cage seemed to be bobbing up and down in ever-increasing leaps and falls, much as a small boy might dangle a ball at the end of a long elastic. Dan swallowed hard. He did not know if this bobbing motion was customary and he did not like to inquire about it.

"Feel that?" asked Jackson with a laugh. "You'll soon get used to it. The cable's got to have elastic play like that or it 'ud break maybe."

"If the ol' string breaks—zowee!", remarked a man behind Dan.

A volley of friendly curses followed.

The cage settled down to a steady, but no less speedy, descent and when Dan felt a pressing against his ear-drums he bethought himself of Jackson's advice. When the cage began slowing it seemed to Dan as if his feet had left the bottom of the cage and he was soaring up the shaft, a sensation often felt not only by novices but by experienced mining men. Dan's deck was stopped with remarkable precision opposite two iron doors. These were swung open by the station tender, who also opened the safety doors of the deck, and Dan and the others stepped off on the turn-sheet after which the other two decks were brought down to discharge their cargoes. The doors were banged shut, the station-tender jerked the signal rope and the cage went hurtling up the shaft. A train of ore-laden mine cars was being backed on the turn-sheet by a squat, powerful electric engine. The contents of cars were being dumped into the chute-pockets,

the ore crashing down the chutes to where the ore skips later could get it. Immediately opposite the iron doors, giving access to this level, and across the turn-sheet, began the long, incandescent-dotted, car-tracked gallery that was the main drift. Men who had been lowered with Dan were passing into it on the way to their work.

The shift boss, Smith, standing near the main drift's entrance, beckoned to Dan and two other men, an Italian and a Finlander, and without a word turned and entered it. Bradshaw and the other two followed. Far along this drift, through cross-cuts and other drifts, they made their way, occasionally stepping aside to let ore trains pass, until they came to a ladder fastened to the timbering beside an ore bin. Up this ladder for eight feet to a small landing and then up another such ladder for a like distance, Dan, the Italian and the Finn followed Smith and finally arrived on the second floor of the stope where they were to shovel ore into a chute that led to the bin, as soon as possible after the rock was broken down from the face where, even now, a machine man and his helper were preparing to drill for the blasting to be done when the shift was ended. Two carbide lamps and several candle flames furnished a murky illumination.

Observing that the Italian and the Finn were putting their lunch buckets in a place of safety at one side, Dan did likewise; for this was to be their dining-room during the eating time.

The shift boss addressed them brusquely.

"Ye fellers muck here", he said. "See that ye keep this floor clean an' the rock goin' into the bin. An' keep under the timberin'." Then he left.

The three equipped themselves with shovels and went to work.

"Ef yuh fall in chute, yuh get hall of a fall", cautioned the Finn.

And so it was that Dan Bradshaw began his first shift as a mucker eighteen hundred feet beneath the surface of a great Butte mine.

* * * *

Eight hours after he had gone on shift, Bradshaw was being rushed to the top in a three-deck cage with some twenty-five of his fellow workers, but the uprush was not nearly as disconcerting to him as had been the lowering in the morning. There were new blisters on his palms at the base of his fingers, and an unaccustomed ache between his shoulder blades.

When the cage shot up into the sunlight, the air seemed wonderfully and crisply invigorating. Half an hour later, hundreds of miners, muckers, topmen and others from the Mont were striding through the big gateway, swinging their lunch buckets, joking and laughing. Some of them stopped just outside the gateway to empty the remnants of their lunches into the big wooden pails held up by various youngsters, who thus secured provender for the cows at home.

Dan and Jackson walked down the graded road together and where a branch road joined it going to a suburb at the city's edge, Jackson left him. When he reached Carty's saloon, Bradshaw hesitated, and then turned into the place. Other mine workers were there. Carty, himself, was tending bar together with his two bartenders.

Dan drew in long draughts from a thick, tall schooner of beer. When he had finished it, Carty extended an invitation.

"Have one on the house."

Bradshaw smiled. "Well, if you insist", he said.

"Ever try a 'alf-and-'alf?" asked Carty.

"Can't say that I have."

"Here, I'll fix you up one—it's half porter and half beer."

Dan sipped the mixture. "Goes good", he declared, and drank it. "I'll try another."

Leaving Carty's, Bradshaw went down Working Lane to Mrs. Inez Harrity's place with more of a swagger. His thoughts sent the blood bounding through his veins. Was he not one of the men who labored underground in one of Butte's greatest mines, which fact of itself betokened much of physical brawn and courage? Was he not one of the army of workers who made this city the famed locality it was? And was this not the place in which to assert himself and win that recognition which would establish him as a leader among men? Was there not much human material all about him waiting for him to mould it as he might see fit? And then when leadership and success came because of what he would do for those whom he would lead, what other possibilities might there not be? Who would not look kindly on a man who would dare and do and prove himself a chieftain among men?

Bradshaw found Walton waiting for him in front of the boarding house, and Dan was pleased, for he liked this tall, serious-minded, quiet but determined man. He admired Walton for his pluck, for the latter a trained newspaperman, had come west for his health and, having been unsuccessful in securing newspaper work in Butte had followed the course of many another of his kind and, asking no odds of anyone, had gone to work in the mines.

"I waited to see you and tell you the good news", said

Walton cheerfully. "I've landed on at last. I'm going to work for the biggest newspaper in Butte."

"Good luck to you, Old Man, good luck!" exclaimed Dan seizing Walton's outstretched hand.

"Will you keep in touch with me?" asked Walton.

"Surest thing you know", declared Dan emphatically. And then with a smile: "But I promise not to make any touches."

CHAPTER V

SHOES AND SOCIALISM

It became more or less a habit with Bradshaw to stop at Carty's after coming off shift, provided he was on a shift that did not end when Carty's was closed, for, like the other saloons in Butte, that place was dark from midnight to eight o'clock the next morning.

Sometimes he would wander up to Carty's during his waking, loafing hours. It was not at all his nature to find surcease from workaday affairs in a saloon, or with the typical saloon element, but Dan found that Carty's in a measure partook of the nature of a man's social club for Working Lane. There he could take a leading part in the discussion of various topics that were considered from different angles and often with much acumen. And as Dan had the faculty of expressing himself well, he frequently was the center of an interested circle in front of the bar. True, there were times when, in a spirit of good fellowship, he drank too many 'alf-and-'alves, not that they seemed to hurt him physically for he worked hard and was in trim condition, but they excited him and then he would talk somewhat boisterously, a bit boastfully and a trifle belligerently. But he won a growing prominence there that was not at all displeasing to his man-nature and even where he worked in the mine, men laboring nearby would seek him out at noon to listen to his ideas while they ate. Some of the rougher clientele

at Carty's, and even the tougher element in the mine, were willing to go so far as to forgive the correctness of his manner of talk and other evidences of Dan's education.

Working steadily, he was able to indulge his taste for neat attire, and even that was forgiven him by his rougher admirers.

Leaving a department store one day, he came face to face for a brief instant with "The Girl of the Train", as he had come to think of her. He was not sure that she recognized him, but that day he did not go to Carty's and his visits at the saloon for a while thereafter were somewhat less frequent. It was apparent, however, that he already had established a degree of prominence in labor circles that brought him to more emphatic notice in the developments of the ensuing months and did not require support by reason of social sessions at Carty's.

There soon came a crisis in the miners' union, to which Dan belonged, that was epochal in the affairs of organized labor throughout the nation. Rent by internal strife, the union split into two distinct organizations, of which the newer one virtually killed the force and effect of the parent body, and then committed suicide by falling under the sway of a radicalism of "Direct Action" type. But socialism, radicalism and direct actionism were not eliminated from the community. Drawing from the Intellectual Socialists, the Radical Socialists and the Direct Actionists, each of which factions had regarded the other two with sneering animosity, there came a fourth and nameless entity whose unrecorded membership was represented at socialist meetings and direct actionist gatherings. It trifled with the "intellectual" considerations of idealistic socialism, and had a hankering for direct actionist methods. Also it was very

peaceful, when there was nothing to be discordant about, or rather when no opportunity for being so afforded itself.

It was with this fourth quantity, unknown as to name, without formal organization or defined purpose, but really more alive than might have been supposed, that Dan became affiliated. He had rather good claim to its leadership for he was asked to decide various questions of moment to its unrecorded membership and there was enough of the physical man in him to enable the enforcement of his dictates by right of might and forcefulness. With adventure still strong in him, he found such power appealing.

In those same months, Bradshaw advanced from muckerdom to the position of machine-drill man in the Mont.

Walton rapidly made his way to the Sunday editorship, where other important editorial duties devolved upon him. Bradshaw visited him both at his office and at his rooms, for though pursuing ever more divergent pathways, these two saw in each other attributes of character which they sincerely liked, and in their discussions they were candid, expressive and honest.

In Bradshaw a dual temperament often manifested itself with regard to the status of society that most attracted him. The artistic, the refined and the true made forceful appeal to his finer nature. Circumstances had thrown him into circles that indeed tried his stamina and wherein his power of assertive leadership, his courage and his belief that he wanted to benefit those whom he felt he had been called on to lead, dominated him. Yet there was the natural prompting that he utilize his ability, his education and his determination for a personal advancement that would enable the consummation

of dreams which he cherished. He sometimes took long walks about the city trying to wrestle with and solve his problems to his own complete satisfaction.

It was on one of these walks that an irritating nail in his shoe caused him to enter a small, leather-odored shop, over whose door were the words on a small, simply painted sign: "Klemner the Cobbler".

Klemner, bowed with years of labor at his cobbler's bench, looked up questioningly and when Dan explained the nature of his visit, invited him to be seated. The shoemaker laid aside the brogan into the sole of which he had been driving hobnails, and took the offending shoe that Bradshaw handed him, smoothing down its soft, pliable leather with toil-wrinkled fingers seamed with years of waxing thread.

"Good shoe", he ventured.

Bradshaw looked up from the paper he had casually picked up from the heap beside his chair. It was titled, "The Socialist Age".

"Yes, pretty good", he agreed affably. "They cost six dollars—ought to be good."

The shoemaker tightened his lips. Six dollars—the price of three pairs of brogans! Without speaking, he finished removing the nail and handed the shoe back to Dan.

"I happened to see a letter in this paper by Clairmont", Dan remarked. "I didn't think Clairmont wrote for this paper. Fact is, I didn't know he was a socialist."

"He writes for nearly every issue", Klemner said, resuming work on the brogan. He nodded at a stack of papers on a shelf behind him where also lay a battered copy of "Looking Backward" and a paper-bound "De-

scent of Man". "He's got letters in all of them papers, too."

"This one", said Bradshaw indicating the paper he had been reading, "is well worded. Ever read any of his books?"

Klemner shook his head. He was a taciturn man, past the meridian of life. His hair was thin and wispy, and his eyes, behind their large, round glasses, were thoughtful.

"You ought to", Bradshaw went on. "They're rated highly." He stood up, thrusting one hand into his pocket. "How much do I owe you?"

Klemner drew the back of his hand across his mouth.

"Clairmont writes books for glory", he said, "but them letters of his is different. He writes them as a teacher. You don't owe me nothing."

"I appreciate your kindness", said the miner holding out his hand. "My name's Bradshaw—Dan Bradshaw."

Klemner stood up and regarded Dan intently. "So you're Dan Bradshaw", he said slowly, as if to himself. Then he shook Dan's hand warmly.

Thus Bradshaw became acquainted with Klemner. He came to know of Klemner's life in the modest three rooms behind his shop. He came to know Klemner's tall, buxomly handsome daughter, Millie. In a burst of confidence the shoemaker once said to Dan, "My daughter Millie ain't got much education 'cause I can't let her get the polish I might if I had the means and", with a dry little laugh, "she won't miss it any 'cause she can only look forward to a workingman for a husband. It wouldn't do for her to be too well educated. It might hurt her chances if the men of her class got the notion she was superior to them, and I want my girl to get at least as good a workingman as she can."

Bradshaw had different ideas on the subject. He overlooked the fact that he was himself a young, vigorous man, good to look upon and much more cultured in those niceties which make appeal to the feminine disposition, than were the men whom Millie was accustomed to meet. It was a pity, he thought, that such perfect, beautiful womanhood should sink away to be lost among those whom Klemner had styled her class.

In his masculine blindness Dan failed to note that Millie was always "dressed up" when he came, that she wore a brightly colored ribbon as a collar and that her large, brown eyes that looked out in almost childish innocence from back of her long, curving lashes, brightened when she saw him. For all her womanly physique she was girlish in demeanor, and Dan was not surprised when Klemner told him that his daughter was but eighteen. He brought her several books that he thought might interest her, and he presented her with a grammar. Occasionally he would share a modest meal with the Klemners in their little dining room back of the shoe shop, and after the shoemaker had expounded some of his socialistic theories and urged Dan to make a deeper study of socialism, he would take up his reading of "*The Socialist Age*", leaving Bradshaw to talk to Millie. Always she would introduce the subject of grammar, so that sitting side by side at the table, he would explain certain matters in the book which she found a bit difficult.

At Klemner's, Dan met Cronel, and found in this dreamy-eyed theorist another interesting study. Indeed most of those whom he met at Klemner's were interesting. They were hard-fisted toilers, children of stern conditions, believing themselves honest in their convictions and forever looking for the coming of a great, illumi-

nating light, making a fetish of their word of words—Evolution. Dan discovered somewhat to his surprise that these men were more cognizant of upper class conditions than were the upper classes of theirs, while at the same time they endeavored to adhere strictly to truth and candor without malice.

One evening when Millie had endured all the grammar that she could for the time, she pushed the book away and led the conversation round to a musical comedy that was to play in Butte the following two nights. Dan invited her to go with him and she was quick to accept choosing the second night of the performance, as she said she had promised to go to the Paperhangers' Fifth Annual ball the next night.

"With whom?" asked Dan jokingly.

"Chris", she answered. "He's been asking me so often to go somewhere with him and he's such an old friend of the family, I don't like to hurt his feelings and not go."

Chris, who had been her devoted admirer for the past year, doubtless would have felt greatly aggrieved had he known that Millie classified him as "a friend of the family", when he fondly imagined he was her recognized "steady".

"Can't you come to the dance too?" Millie asked Dan.

"I hardly think so—at least if I did look in at the hall sometime during the evening I don't think I'd dance anyway", he replied.

"Maybe you'd change your mind after you got there", she remarked.

Bradshaw laughed good-naturedly.

* * * * *

The ball was nearing its close when Bradshaw looked in, and Millie, who had been keeping an eye on the en-

trance doors of the hall all the evening, to the mystification of her escort, saw him immediately. She gave him a welcoming smile when he approached her and moved over on the long wall bench to give him a place beside her.

"I've saved you some dances" she said but he smiled and shook his head.

"Not dancing tonight", he replied, "but I'll enjoy sitting out a dance with you if you'll let me."

Chris excused himself with a bluntness occasioned by diffidence and more or less resentment.

"I have the next dance", Millie told Bradshaw, "but we'll sit out the one after that."

Then one, Mike Vignon, whose perverse sobriquet in the "Direct Action" circles of which he was the admitted leader was "Red Mike" from the fact of his pronounced swarthiness, came to claim her for the ensuing dance and she tripped lightly away with him.

"So Bradshaw's too good to come to a dance like this, but jus' drops in on it to see some certain party", Vignon remarked brazenly to her as they followed the others in their slightly free and easy, yet very graceful manner of dancing. "He kind of hangs 'round your place a whole lot, don't he?"

"It's none of your business what he does", Millie replied with spirit, and her challenging eyes were not so childishly innocent.

"Chris don't seem to like it much either", Vignon persisted. "Chris is a joke. That guy waltzes like a mule an' he's a mule in everything else too."

Had Vignon made any such remark about Chris before the advent of Bradshaw, Millie would have deeply resented the slur. As it was, she looked at him scornfully. Vignon came sometimes to Klemner's shop and

when in his cups he openly avowed his liking for Klemner's daughter. She had never shown the least liking for him, but for her father's sake did not want to affront him.

When the dance was finished he returned her to her place with never a look at Bradshaw and left the hall to visit the saloon two doors away. He found Chris there and engaged him in conversation, buying him several drinks during the course of their talk.

"I thought you would come and dance with me", Millie chided Bradshaw.

He protested that certain organization affairs had kept him away.

"Oh I know, that old League that's been organized", she said poutingly. "Dad says you are a kind of a leader in it. Oh yes, you are—he says so. He says he thinks you are going to be great like Clairmont. He's always talking about Clairmont. Do you know Clairmont?"

"No", said Bradshaw with a laugh.

"Neither do I", she went on. "He never comes to our shop."

Bradshaw glanced at her in sharp surprise. As he had become better acquainted with her he had realized that nature had been more bountiful in gift of beauty to Klemner's daughter than in perspicacity, but he had not expected anything quite like this from her. "Oh no, Clairmont lives in New York", he rejoined casually.

"I'll tell you something else", she went on. "I heard Dad tell Mr. Cronel that if you would study socialism more you'd be the leader of what he said was their cause. And do you know what Mr. Cronel said?"

Bradshaw smiled. "No, I can't imagine."

"He said"—and she imitated Cronel's tone as best she could—"If Clairmont, why not Bradshaw? He too

has education, personal magnetism and enthusiasm and he would be a great man for the Intellectuals if directed along the right channel.' There! Wasn't it nice of me to remember that just to tell you how much they think of you?"

He was man enough to like her praise. It was rather gratifying to appear so much a man among men even in the eyes of the shoemaker's daughter for, after all, Millie was beautiful, and compliments from a beautiful woman are never unpleasant to man-nature. Bradshaw thought he never had seen Millie Klemner more attractive than now. Her hair, of the same warm tint as her eyes, was ample enough to surround her well poised head with a coronet of thick braids. And as he often had done before, Bradshaw wondered at her remarkably fine complexion and at the perfect blending of the blush in her cheeks with the milk whiteness of her neck which, full-throated and firmly modeled, he could see at the 'V' opening at the top of her bodice and sweeping down to the swelling curve of her bosom.

The charm of her physical attraction swept over and enveloped him for a moment.

"Don't forget the show tomorrow night", he said emphatically, bending a trifle nearer her.

She flashed him a look from the corner of her eyes and her smile disclosed the even whiteness of her teeth.

CHAPTER VI

CRESCENDOES

Arrayed in her finest, Millie indeed presented a most attractive picture when Bradshaw called for her the following evening. A deeper blush suffused her cheeks as she saw him. And Bradshaw was delighted at the thought of escorting so good-looking a girl.

The production proved entertaining, and their places in the second balcony afforded them a view of the stage that Millie enthusiastically declared to be "awful grand". During the first act, Millie chewed gum, but otherwise Dan enjoyed the show immensely. Millie's conversation during the single intermission was inane and only by glancing at her frequently could he maintain the theory that she surely was too splendid a specimen of womanhood to be permitted to slip away into dull obscurity for the want of the right sort of stimulus. He was pleased to find that the second and concluding act began with the absence of Millie's gum-chewing accompaniment and he felt more kindly toward her. He resolved that if given the proper opportunity he would try to make her realize that it would be far more compatible with the appearance of such a young woman as Miss Millie Klemner for her to eschew gum.

As they came down one of the broad inclines leading to the foyer, Dan, glancing casually over the stream of laughing, chatting people down below him, paused

sharply for a moment, the blood surging through him. He was looking at "The Girl of the Train" in the midst of a gay theater party.

He was silent as he and Millie left the theater. It was as if Millie abruptly recalled him from some abstraction when she indicated the other girl stepping into a big, roomy limousine and exclaimed, "My! ain't that girl got on the loveliest opry cloak!"

And Dan wondered why Millie's pointing and words had so annoyed him. But he inwardly thanked Millie when she declined to accompany him to a restaurant, saying that 'she had a bit of lunch at home for him and her father'.

Arrived at the shop, they found Cronel there and, to their surprise, Vignon, who left at once. The Direct Actionist knew that Chris was drinking at Carty's and a malicious scheme had presented itself to Vignon.

"Come in and help me set the table", Millie said to Dan, while Klemner and Cronel sat smoking and talking in the shop.

After Bradshaw had helped her spread the cloth, she laughingly urged him to sit down while she brought in the lunch from the kitchen. Dan took a chair at the table and busied himself with a newspaper he had picked up. As the girl leaned over to place a plate on the table, her hair brushed his cheek and as she straightened up her hand rested lightly on his for a moment. He tingled at the contact and turned towards her forgetting for an instant everything but her physical lure. With a laugh, the girl went into the kitchen and when she reappeared, she found Bradshaw again closely scanning the newspaper. She stopped behind him and ran her fingers through his hair. In the momentary feeling of revulsion

that was his Dan also realized that again Millie was briskly chewing gum.

He arose and she confusedly placed the plate she was holding on the table.

At that moment the shop's front door was flung open and Chris, wild-eyed and menacing, staggered in. Vignon had abandoned him at the door of the shop and had stepped over to the window to peer in at the scene to be enacted. This was to be a double donouement—the disgrace of Chris in the eyes of Millie and a declaration of war from Chris to Bradshaw. More—it involved Bradshaw with a girl which would help to weaken Bradshaw's leadership, if not utterly ruin him.

Klemner and Cronel rose, and Klemner shut the front door.

Chris stumbled to the dining-room door and for a moment was seemingly perplexed as though he were not sure as to the number of Bradshaws he saw.

"You, Bradshaw", he called out. "You come for Meelie, but you skal no get her. I keel you, Bradshaw, if you come for Meelie. An' me an' Vignon we kick you out of the League."

Klemner's daughter turned white and stared at him. Chris held out his arms towards her.

"Meelie, Meelie, I come for you", he cried out piteously. He moved forward and fell prostrate, his head striking the fender of the stove with a thud, before he measured his length on the floor.

The girl uttered a sharp cry.

Bradshaw and Cronel hastily raised Chris and propped him up on a chair.

"Get some water, Millie", ordered her father tersely, and she turned at once to obey him.

Presently, after Dan had applied a cold compress to Chris' head, that badly dazed man began to regain possession of his senses. He sank back weakly. Millie placed another cold bandage over the swelling on his forehead, and he smiled up at her. When Dan came in line of his vision, Chris also looked benignly at him and it was evident that he no longer harbored any ill-will against anyone. His chin dropped forward and a long drawn snore came from him. Chris slumbered.

Bradshaw glanced at the girl, gathering up the wet cloths. She picked up the basin of water and went into the other room. He felt very sorry for her. It had been a most unpleasant ordeal.

"Good night, Klemner", said Bradshaw quietly, and took similar leave of Cronel.

All at once he seemed very apart from them. Instinctively they had recognized a superiority in this man who, in this moment, had not been able to conceal his class.

Outside, Bradshaw drew a long breath of the sweet, night air. He was heart and soul in need of affiliation with what the most cultured part of his nature demanded. So, with head erect, he went towards the more brilliantly lighted avenues determined to see and talk to Walton, who, as he knew, was in his rooms convalescing after a severe cold.

Vignon, who had witnessed the whole affair from without the window, walked sullenly, with muttered curses, back to Carty's.

Bradshaw found the newspaperman comfortable in dressing robe, enjoying the warmth of his grate-fire, for it was late in the Fall.

"I'm glad you've come", said Walton smiling, as his friend took possession of a favorite big chair before the fire and lighted his pipe.

"I will confess that you and your cheerful grate have a powerful attraction for me", declared the miner. "Do you mind my turning out the light?"

Walton searched around on the chair beside him for his pipe.

"Turn her out", he agreed heartily. There was a perfect mutual understanding between these two men and the boyish breeziness that Bradshaw displayed at times delighted the newspaperman.

"It might seem curious", Bradshaw began with a little laugh as he settled back again in his chair, after pushing the "off" button of the light switch, "but being able to sit here and talk to you John, makes a grate-fire doubly attractive in a compensating way for—for disappointments. It's a luxury there is no way of enjoying at the hostelry of Mrs. Inez Harrity. For the life of me I can't figure out the analogy, but just the same, being here right now like this has the effect on me that certain kinds of music have. Now you take good, light, cheerful comic opera stuff—just enough to remind you of the dazzle and the dancing and all that—why it makes you glad to be alive, just plain, everyday Mr. Nobody, but glad you're living and glad you are liking it. Grasp the idea?"

"Perfectly". Walton puffed slowly at his pipe.

Bradshaw watched the lazy curls of smoke from both pipes blending near the ceiling. "And for the good of the soul", he went on, "give me Irish music, for plaintive or gay it has a soul and a character of its own and it gets right into the heart of you. Then there's another kind, like Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody,—the one that is heavy, ponderous, rippling up and down, always giving promise

of something to come, some part that is going to be a surprise, something more ponderous than the rest and many times more charming, and then it calms down to a tiny trickle of a trill and breaks out grandly, swelling into full crescendo."

"Crescendo's good," Walton murmured. "Seems to me, Dan, my Lad, that is just about what you are hitting for. The city editor who has a very efficient underground news system, tells me you are the inspiring melody in certain circles, my dear young socialistic-anarchistic scholar. Seriously though, Dan, a man who can talk as you can has no business mucking in a mine."

"Mirthful kicker, I am a machine-drill man and not a mucker, and furthermore I am right where I ought to be, close to my people. Oh yes, don't scoff. They are my people for I have made them so. I want to help them. I want to get them thinking and reasoning and trying to better their condition properly and logically. I can't interest them unless I show that I am one of them or they might become suspicious. I've got to make myself more or less conspicuous."

Walton laughed shortly.

"The impetuosity and sublime egotism of enthusiastic youth—that's what's ailing you most, Dan. Your people, as you call them, are with you now for they like novelties and you are still a novelty to them. I honor and like a great many of them. But you look only at the surface. You do not understand crowd psychology. Anyway, what is your ultimate purpose for them—what is the grand idea?"

"Proper evolution along proper lines—that's about as close a definition as I can give off-hand", replied Bradshaw. "I can't go into detail, because there are certain conditions involved that you haven't studied John, if

you really knew the meaning of 'bourgeois' and 'proletariat' you might better understand the matter."

"Bourgeois—the middle-class you mean. Why Dan—"

"Excuse me, John", Bradshaw interrupted, "that doesn't mean the middle class. When the heads of the French nobility fell the middle class came into power. There are only two classes existing today—the bourgeois and the proletariat—that is to say the ruling class and—"

Walton gestured with his pipe. "And what Cronel calls the 'wage-slaves'. Oh yes—I've heard all that stuff too. No Dan, where you fellows with the glib socialist and direct actionist phrases get in your work in attracting a following is by the expressed or intimated promise of a system of the great divide-up of all earthly possessions. Such a theory is against human nature. A plan of that kind would kill ambition; men would even forget to invent. You see, at intervals they would have to divide up again and so on until the really energetic and capable ones would quit in sheer disgust. Finally it would mean stagnation or the most fearful civil war that the world has ever seen."

"I don't advocate the divide-up plan", Bradshaw persisted. "Ambition can't be killed and men are sure to progress despite even strenuous opposition. I want talent and brain to receive their proper consideration and compensation too."

"And so they should and do", declared the newspaper-man. "But if the Cronel pipe-dream suddenly could be put into effect, how long do you imagine those of less brain power than others would be willing to have higher compensation given to those of even proved greater ability? Why man—human nature makes us perfectly willing, I should say eager, to concede our own greatness."

Bradshaw was just as vehement. "Human nature! —it is only a matter of education and yet a most convenient thing on which to lay our sins and some of the troublesome habits we haven't the moral courage to change."

Walton laughed. "Dan, my boy, there's a keenness of a kind in you. No wonder you are a leader in that new League of yours."

Bradshaw bowed with mock gratification.

The newspaperman turned his head the better to contemplate the miner. "And now be honest and admit this to me, Dan—is it not true that many of those whom you have met assembled under the banners of socialism, radicalism, direct actionism, the League and what-not of that character, are not students of political economy or any other kind of students, nor sociologists nor altruists, but just a disgruntled, envious and often trouble-seeking element ready to hurl their own leaders to perdition if that would mean personally benefitting themselves?" He paused a moment and continued more earnestly. "Tell me, lad, would they not do that to you despite your avowed purpose to try to help them, lead them on to better things, if they thought it to their individual interests to do so? Have they not those very faults which they are so ready to ascribe to others who do not think as they do?"

"W-ell", rejoined Bradshaw slowly, "I can't exactly say 'yes' to your complex question. Strictly speaking, there might be a proportion of those who appear disgruntled, but I believe even they are steadfast. I think they can and will be led on to seeing the light. Also, I think Cronel is sincere."

"Granted that he is", assented Walton, "but mighty impractical. I only hope that neither you nor he, Dan,

ever will have to put some of your disciples to the real test."

A thrice-repeated gentle knocking on the door caused Walton to arise and switch on the lights. In response to his invitation the door opened admitting a head covered with thin, red hair, a hawklike nose over-hanging a very wide mouth, now distorted into a caricature of a smile, florid blue-veined jowls in loose folds on either side of a lantern-jawed face, remarkably deep-set eyes,—all poised on a long neck with a prominent Adam's apple.

"I intrude, kind Sirs?" came a soft-spoken, questioning voice.

"It's Crunch", remarked Walton in a tone of patient resignation. He resumed his place at the fire, moving his chair so that he could face his latest visitor. "Enter, Crunch." Then;—"You come most carefully upon your hour."

Crunch stepped glidingly forward, closing the door behind him. His actions had a cat-like quickness. He was tall with sloping shoulders. His soft, tieless shirt went incongruously with his out-of-date Prince Albert suit of an oddly blended gray and brown. He nervously fingered his battered felt hat, rolling and unrolling the brim. His feet were small, unusually so for a man of his height, and even the coarse, broken shoes he wore did not conceal the fact that his were high, well-modeled insteps.

When Walton, remembering Crunch's Shakespearean hobby, had addressed him accordingly, the latter had beamed with pleasure. To talk Shakespeare, to make use of his phrases, discuss his heroes and analyze his heroines, to probe his plots, formed Crunch's chief delight. He would leave any other engagement, even an invitation to have a drink, to gloat over some choice

Shakespearean bit, some philosophical expression taken from the works of the only pen-master he cared to know. Librarians in the city's public library came to have a mild hatred for him because of his persistent inquiries for books on Shakespearean research. Once a managing editor had asked him, in the days when Crunch was a steady, high-class copy-reader, what interpretation he placed on a certain character in a Shakespearean comedy seldom portrayed, and Crunch never forgot that. He raised his hat whenever that editor's name was mentioned.

"Gentlemen", Crunch began in his soft-pitched voice,—"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,—It drop-peth"—

Walton interrupted him banteringly.

"Oh drop it Crunch. How much do you want to borrow tonight?"

Crunch's caricature of a smile widened to a pronounced grin.

"A mere bagatelle, a nothing, a trifle to tide me over till my ship comes in."

"'Words, words, words.' You mean until you can hike out for a drink", said Walton.

Crunch drew himself up.

"That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this,—"

he began with whatever sternness he could command.

"You have condemn'd and noted"—

"That's all right, Crunch", Bradshaw interposed soothingly, and then added with assumed mournfulness, "I fear that you are suffering from an itching palm."

Crunch waved an arm dramatically.

"I an itching palm!

You know that you are Brutus that speak this,
Or by the gods, this speech were else your last."

"Shut up, you lean and hungry Cassius", Walton remarked unconcernedly. "Don't get excited. Sit down and tell us what brings you here?"

Crunch seated himself gingerly on the edge of a chair. He looked directly at Walton from whom he hoped to secure the object of his visit.

"Sir", he said,—“I could a tale unfold,”—

But Walton broke in abruptly on Crunch's words.

"Didn't you go to Direct Actionist headquarters the other night and get thrown out? You've got to cut that kind of thing from your repertoire, Crunch."

The latter sprang to his feet, declaiming;

“‘Pity me not; but lend thy serious hearing—To what I shall unfold.’ ‘Marry, Sir, here’s my drift;’

That unregenerate hound Vignon did mouth much. Aye, I know the gentleman. I once did ask him for a loan, a bagatelle, a mere trifle, nothing to speak of, but he did refuse me sourly. And yet he is ever ready to smile and shake my hand. Ah,—“That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;”.

“I knew him when—‘But ’tis common proof, That lowliness is young ambition’s ladder, Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;’ And verily he has come to—‘scorning the base degrees by which he did ascend:’ What I desired from him was unworthy a gentleman’s refusal. But to continue. This same vile one preaches of Direct Action and says there are injustices. And yet, ‘tis true; ‘tis true ‘tis pity; And pity ‘tis ‘tis true:’ Great Caesar”—

“Great-grandmother”, Walton put in. “What did you say that made them throw you out?”

Crunch thrust his face forward.

"I spoke those truths which they are not yet prepared to receive. I said it was to that system they must look, Sirs, which will guarantee the common ownership"—

"Yes, we know all that," Walton interrupted.

Crunch paused a moment to gaze at him abstractedly, and resumed.

"Man must be the master of his own form of social organization, consequently become lord over nature and his own master; become in the word's deepest meaning, emancipated. Then", he finished more quietly, "they requested me to desist, and when I persisted they had a committee throw me out."

"You see", said Walton to Bradshaw, "how they get all that stuff from Cronel and how glibly they learn it too?"

"You wrong me", Crunch protested. "No unkind dictate of Nature has come as a sudden calamity to deprive me of the power to reason."

"No, it wasn't done suddenly, I'll admit", said Walton, but Crunch ignored the remark and broke into a fierce tirade.

"Yet when reasoning fails to achieve result there are other ways. We have rights and we demand them. Mayhap Vignon is right. If need be 'twere better to eat a meal in the county jail or in military camp than perchance to have to sneak around for a handout at a free-lunch institution."

"Oh, infernal rot!", ejaculated Walton, refilling his pipe.

"That's sure enough Vignon's talk", added Bradshaw.

"Indeed Vignon is a vile disturber," Crunch hastily declared, perceiving he perhaps had blundered too far.

"How much is the loan tonight, Crunch? Name the mere bagatelle, the nothing, the whatever it is", and Walton reached a hand into his pocket.

"Ah kind Sir, you are no tight purse", answered the smiling Crunch. "I do need something of that which I sometimes think is—'—mightiest in the mightiest.' "

Deftly he caught the coin which Walton tossed to him and bowed. "'Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.' "

"That enough?" asked Walton.
Crunch grinned.

"'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide
As a church door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve:."

Then as Crunch bowed again and turned to go, Bradshaw called to him and handed him a quarter. Crunch looked at the coin in his hand and then intently at Bradshaw.

"'Twas a largesse quite unexpected," he said with quiet emphasis. "I value it and the donor. I may return the generosity many-fold some day". And then he went.

Walton switched out the lights again and resumed his place.

"Some of those Direct Actionists", he said, "are surely spreading the seed of their discontent."

Dan smoked on for a few moments in silence. Then he took his pipestem from his mouth and blew a long tobacco cloud.

"Can you see why a strong hand is needed, John? Don't think I'm too egotistical, but they need,—in fact, they must have one who will teach them and lead them right. And that one must be able to assume a leading place if necessary so that he can help them the more. Also it would be a very good idea for him to attain the proper status to back up his leadership."

"That is to say, my Daniel in the lions' den, that you propose, for instance, to be ready when they get ready, if they do to send you to the legislature or even higher and that you will arrange if you can, to have them continue following you as their teacher. But I am very dubious as to the result of your optimism, my son. You are apt to find that you can't hold your element any more than the members of it can hold themselves together. Crowd psychology is a very peculiar proposition. And how fickle is the crowd!"

"You don't understand, John", said Bradshaw, smiling to himself. "You're all fed up on the other side of the question. I know my people. You see, I stay right there with them to lead them right."

"And Vignon?"

"Pshaw—they'll see through him!"

"They will? Well, don't lose track of him while proceeding to demonstrate your ability to carry them and yourself through to any certain point. You're dealing with a very complex problem, a complex idealism and a very complex lot. As Paddy Skiff would say, 'Ye kin be kind to a man an' he'll luv ye, but ye kin be so kind to a crowd that it'll suspect ye.'"

"Which reminds me that Paddy Skiff has good need of his own philosophic consolations these days", stated Dan.

"How so?" demanded Walton, interested. "Is he in trouble? I thought that peripatetic philosophy had come to take the place of his wild-eyed notions of the years when he was some goer, my boy, some rough and ready direct actionist of his own."

Bradshaw laughed.

"Well, it's all according to how you look at it. He's in love."

Walton sat up startled.

"Love?" he asked as though he had misunderstood.

"Fact", Bradshaw nodded. "Mrs. Inez Harrity."

Hurrying from Walton's rooms, Crunch betook himself to Carty's, and if he was dry when he started, he was parched when he arrived. After the second drink had gone burning down his throat, he turned to look about him. Several customers were at tables drinking or playing cards. One individual stood balanced in a corner rolling vacant eyes and muttering protests to himself.

At the rear of the room, a fierce-eyed man was standing beside a table beating on it from time to time with a brawny fist as he addressed a surly group seated about before him.

"Yeh, damn 'em, no more bunk I say—no more bunk. The day'll come when we'll show 'em what we are." He glowered at his small audience and the veins stood out plainly on his muscular neck. "Reason with 'em? To hell with 'em. We'll give 'em this", and he motioned as if swinging a heavy sledge hammer over his shoulder. "We'll give 'em a dose of direc' action. Betcher life I'm not afraid to talk an' I kin act too. They got to keep me at work 'cause I go down into places none a you guys or anybody like you would go."

Crunch paid his check and moved to a chair near the speaker.

The man beside the table continued. "Listen to me, you guys, there's a bird named Bradshaw is goin' to find out the League ain't no milk-sop prop'sition. The time is coming—an' have 'nother drink."

Crunch recognized the fierce-eyed man as Vignon.

CHAPTER VII

DANGER SIGNS

Impelled by the chivalrous motive of making Millie forget her embarrassment occasioned by the unpleasant incident in which Chris had figured as the chief actor, Dan, en route to the first special meeting of the League the following night, dropped in at Klemner's. He was received with taciturn friendliness by the shoemaker, and when Millie heard Dan speaking to her father in the shop, she hastily straightened her hair, tied a ribbon around her neck and took the grammar from its place behind the clock in the dining room. So when Bradshaw looked in through the doorway he saw that she apparently was deeply engaged in study.

With seeming artlessness, she looked up at him as if taken by surprise and tried to appear as wan as so buxom a girl possibly could.

"How's the studying coming on?" asked Dan casually as if nothing had happened.

"I done a lot of hard work on it today", she replied, fingering the leaves of the book. "There's some things in it I'd like to ask you about."

Bradshaw advanced into the room and picked up the book.

"Special meeting of the League tonight ain't there?" Klemner called from the shop where he was busy soaking soles.

Dan turned his head. "Yes. I'm on my way there now. You going?"

"'Praps I'd ought to", returned the shoemaker, "but I guess they can get along without me tonight. There's a lot of soreness, I'm told, among some of the boys about what happened at the Golden West mine."

Millie had arisen and was leaning back against the table. "What happened at the Golden West?" she asked, for Chris worked there.

"A couple of men were fired—two of the sabotage bunch I think", Dan told her. "Vignon and his crowd want them reinstated. I think I'd better be on my way."

"Have you got to go to the meeting?" Millie whispered softly.

Dan smiled. "I think so", he replied.

"But I wanted you to explain something in the book tonight", she persisted, looking up at him.

That was the strongest appeal she could have made to him, but he replied banteringly. "There may be some excitement at the League. You wouldn't want me to miss it, would you?"

Millie pouted. "I shouldn't think you'd care so much for the old League. They didn't even make you president of it, and Dad says you're the brains of the League."

"That was very kind of 'Dad'", Dan laughed. And then, because he did not care to go into a futile explanation of how it was that Cronel, chief of the socialist scholastic faction had been chosen president by way of compromise between the Direct Action contingent which Vignon headed, and the conservative element directed by Bradshaw, he added, "Oh I couldn't be president because I like to do a lot of talking, and the president is not permitted to say much."

But after he had gone, Millie pursed her lips and frowned. "Old League!" she exclaimed, as she spitefully stuck the grammar back of the clock.

Her father, who had entered the room, laid a hand on her shoulder as she passed him.

"Millie girlie", he said, "listen to me", and he looked into her eyes. "Don't get foolish notions."

She tossed her head. "I wish Chris would come and take me to a movie", she declared emphatically.

The shoemaker shook his head and went back to soaking soles.

The girl, alone in the room, stamped her foot impatiently on the floor. "I know if I asked Chris not to go to any old League meeting he wouldn't go", she said querulously to herself. "If I didn't amount to enough in it to be the president I wouldn't go to the old thing." Then she laughed and began to hum under her breath. "Paw, where's that there comic supplement I had?" she called out to the shoemaker.

Bradshaw arrived before the meeting was called to order and immediately he was surrounded by a group. In the midst of his questionings, Cronel took his place back of the pulpit-like desk on the low platform at the head of the hall, peering forward through the smoke haze as he convened the session.

"Comrades, the meeting will come to order. Please come to order", he repeated several times, rapping on the desk with his knuckles.

When a fair semblance of order had been obtained, Cronel explained the purpose of the meeting.

"Comrades", he began in halting fashion, for he was a fluent speaker only when preaching his socialist doctrine, "this meeting has been called for by twenty-five members of the League, enough to ask for a special ses-

sion, to—er—to take up the matter of—er—the summary discharge of two of our members from the Golden West mine of the Norton properties and it is claimed that their discharge was on the suspicion of—er—of having practiced sabotage in the mine. They—er—I”—

“Well what did they do?”, called out a voice.

“As I was about to inform you, Comrades”, Cronel went on, “they are accused of having twisted off a switch-lever and to have that way delayed ore transportation on an entire level for three hours.”

Several laughs came from the body of the hall.

Cronel rapped on his desk.

“Comrades, what is your pleasure? What is to”—

“We’re prop’ly organized”, said a rough-looking member rising, “but we ain’t got no grievance committee. But I say le’s find out ‘bout this thing. Le’s see if these guys kin be kicked out on ‘spicion that way.”

“Do you put that in the form of a motion?” asked Cronel leaning forward over the desk the better to see the speaker.

“Naw, I don’t put it in the form of nawthin’”, retorted the other and this sally again brought laughter, whereupon he sat down with a pleased expression on his face.

Two other members stood up.

After a moment’s hesitation Cronel decided that Comrade Malley should have the floor.

Malley began to speak but the other member disputed possession of the floor and Cronel admonished the interrupter.

“All right, Cronel, all right”, acquiesced the one who had been called to order. “I’m a divide-up guy, too, so let him have th’ floor” and he sat down but as his remark was somewhat of a thrust at what was taken to be

Cronel's "divide-up" theory, that caused more laughter.

True there were those of the membership ready to laugh at almost anything, but not so much by way of enjoyment as in derision.

The man who retained possession of the floor then spoke. He was a Bradshaw follower.

"Mr. President", he began, "I make a motion that th' investigatin' of this matter be left in th' han's of a committee of one, an' that he report at th' meetin' nex' Monday night."

"Is there a second to the motion?" asked Cronel.

Several voices called out, "Secon' th' moshun."

A figure near the door arose and announced with great dignity.

"I desire at this time, my brothers, to second the proposed motion."

It was Crunch, and Cronel tapped on the desk to stop the laughter that ensued.

"Please sit down", ordered the chairman. "You're out of order."

Other cries were directed at Crunch.

"Sit down!" "Throw him out!" "Git th' axe!"

Crunch bowed and subsided.

The vote being called for, the motion prevailed by reason of the affirmative shouts being louder.

Someone called for "Bradshaw." The call was repeated from all parts of the hall.

"Comrade Bradshaw is asked to speak", said Cronel, a bit bewildered by the insistent demands.

Dan arose and held up a hand to quiet the demonstration of approval that followed. He indeed would have been greatly pleased could Walton have been present to witness this evidence of his popularity.

"Fellow Workers", he began, and that was an auspicious start for the term he used in addressing them indeed was a favorite form of salutation at such meetings, "I am rather inclined to favor a grievance committee."

"Young fellah Bradshaw!" called out an enthusiastic voice.

"In this case", Dan continued, "a motion having been carried for an investigating committee of one, perhaps—"

"You're th' boy fer it", came an interrupting shout.

"What I was going to say", Dan went on heedless of the interruption, "is that maybe in this case one investigator would do, but as a general proposition, perhaps a regularly established or maybe I should say a permanent grievance committee would be found more satisfactory."

While he was still standing another member jumped up and waved an arm to attract Cronel's attention. "I make a moshun that Dan Bradshaw do th' investigatin'", he shouted, which was greeted with much applause and was seconded with a volley.

"It has been moved and duly seconded", began Cronel, but he was vehemently interrupted by a chorus of ayes.

"Comrade Bradshaw is duly elected to investigate the case at issue", he announced.

"I thank you, Fellow Workers, for the trust you repose in me", said Dan. "I'll look into the matter." His glance swept the room and he saw Paddy Skiff and Jackson and others of his friends looking up at him. "I'll do my best to do the square thing in this. Who are the men involved, Mr. President?"

Neither Vignon nor any of his coterie had evidenced a disposition to take part in the discussion nor even to vote, but at this point "Red Mike" bellowed out: "Stan'

up youse guys an' show yerselves. Let 'em all see who's bin made the victims this time."

The two men stood up, one of them with braggadocio manner and the other somewhat sheepishly. Bradshaw smiled when he recognized them as Wilkins and Snitch, and he knew them to be creatures of Vignon. Also the sight of Wilkins and Snitch always recalled to Dan the time he had so emphatically rebuked them on the road above Carty's, the day when first he had spoken to—but then, he remembered all details of the incident very clearly.

After the meeting had been adjourned and the membership had broken up into groups, some to remain and smoke while they talked and others to wend their way to favorite resorts, Paddy Skiff joined Bradshaw.

"Dan, I'm anxious to talk with ye", he stated. "Come with me to Carty's."

Seated at a secluded corner table in Carty's, Paddy began cautiously over their 'alf and 'alves. "Wist Dan, there's somethin' ye should know. I got it straight 'cause I overheard it an' no one knew I was gettin' it, d'y'e mind. There's a divil a lot of trouble brewin' in that Direc' Action crowd."

"What now, Paddy?" asked Bradshaw interestedly.

"They're sore 'bout them two fellers bein' kicked out of the Goldin Wist, as I have no doubts them two bums should a bin. An' the talk I was after hearin' was ugly."

Bradshaw frowned. "What would they do? How far would they go?"

Paddy flapped a hand at him. "Ach, sure an' there's them amongst them would stop at nothin'. Wist—take me tip, lad, for ye know my feelin's toward ye—have a care for yerself too. There's them amongst them has

hard feelin's agin ye an' I'm after thinkin' sure enough that Vignon is back of the whole business."

Bradshaw laughed shortly. "Don't get nervous, Paddy. That gang can't scare me. I don't scare worth a hang."

"Now, now, tut, tut", and Paddy tapped on the table. "Don't ye get too brash, me lad. I've always said ye was a hot-head 'an so ye are in some ways, but yer a cliver hot-head an' ye well kin have sense in bein' careful."

"I appreciate your concern in me, Paddy, and your warning", declared Bradshaw quickly. "And I try to keep my eyes open too."

Paddy took hasty survey of the place and then beckoned to Dan with his head, leaning over closer to talk to him. "Give me a answer to a question, lad. What's the most importint stope, would ye say, in the Mont right now?"

"Why, that might be rather hard to say", replied Bradshaw slowly. "I really think the one I'm drilling in is as important as any."

"Well now don't ye know fer a fact that the biggest ore strike made in the Mont in some time is right in that stope yer workin' in?" Paddy went on.

"Yes, I guess that's right".

"Ah ha! an' how many times has DeWitt Nortin bin there to inspect it?"

"He hasn't seen it yet because we've been getting it in shape for him."

"When will he see it?"

"Paddy, you're sure some cross-examiner", Dan laughed. "Why, I think he'll drop in on us most any time now."

Paddy spoke slowly and impressively. "Lad, whenever Nortin comes to inspect that stope, ye keep yer eyes

peeled. Keep 'em peeled—d'ye mind me? Nortin don't make no secret of inspectin' his properties. That man goes any place any time. He don't know fear."

That DeWitt Norton, chief owner of the Mont and other great mining properties in the district, was a fearless man was a fact well known among the miners. Norton had the reputation of never sending a man into any part of a mine in which he was interested that he would not go into himself. He kept his properties up to the topnotch in matters of pay, safety and justice.

Paddy looked keenly at Bradshaw. "I'm after havin' a dom good hunch that there is those would like to see a accident—mind ye, I say accident—get Nortin an' at the same time get ye. It's jus' 'cause they're devils at heart an' hell raisers. There's some of 'em mighty jealous of ye."

Dan put a hand on Paddy's muscular fist. "Out with it, Paddy. What do you know about this and what do you mean? Give me the entire proposition. No riddles now."

"Maybe there's nothin' to get hot-headed about, lad, but it's jus' a word of warnin' an' that's good even fer the wise. I knock aroun' some meself an' I pick up a word here an' a word there an' I still kin put one an' one together." He looked squarely into Dan's eyes. "Why lad, dom ye, can't ye see I've the feelin' of a father fer his son fer ye, an' if I got suspicions that may help save ye I'm goin' to tell 'em to ye."

"And I appreciate that more than I can tell you, Paddy", declared Bradshaw. "But even admitting that some of them might try to frame up a way to get Norton—how could they get me?"

"Lad, lad, use yer wits", protested Paddy. "If Nortin ever was hurted near where ye are workin' you know

what that might mean to ye. No doubt ye would be the one most blamed. An' if they could do worse to him, bad cess to their bloody hearts, they'd like to fix it so's ye would git yours."

"And why?"

"Yer in somebody's way."

"I'll be on my guard all right, Paddy Skiff", said Bradshaw, and there was a stronger set to his jaw.

"An' remember, lad, they'll not work their game openly. Oh no, not them. You kin bet yer sweet life that if anything happens to Nortin, 'twill look like a accident—so any time Nortin inspects the new stope yer in, keep yer dom eyes open."

Vignon and some of his crowd entered. Dan and Paddy settled back in their chairs. Dan called the floor boy over and ordered an 'alf-and-'alf for Paddy and himself, whereupon the floor boy, swaggering to the bar commanded the bartender loudly: "Draw two—black an' brown!"

Later, when Bradshaw and Paddy were about to leave Carty's place, Paddy put a hand on Dan's shoulder. "A moment, lad—come over here a minute till I show ye somethin' an' ask yer advice", he said somewhat embarrassedly drawing Dan to the cigar case and taking a sheet of paper from an inner pocket of his coat. "See if ye think it reads all right", he said, handing the paper to Dan.

"Why, it's a poem!" exclaimed Bradshaw, looking up in surprise.

"Of course it's a pome", asserted Paddy with emphasis. "Did ye think now 'twas a snake? What I do be wantin' to know is—do it read all right?"

Dan regarded the paper again.

"It has a very touching sentiment", he decreed finally, "even if it does make 'love' rhyme with 'tough'. Are you going to send it to her?" he questioned dryly.

Paddy took the paper and carefully restored it to his inner pocket.

"I wisht I had the nerve", sighed the old ex-dynamiter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOPHER HOLE

As Bradshaw had told Paddy Skiff, he indeed was not subject to groundless fears, but he knew that Paddy was not given to the repeating of idle rumors. Also he reasoned that Paddy's past experiences enabled that quondam "goer", as Walton had referred to him, to judge when there was mischief under way among those of the ilk designated by Paddy as "divils" and "hell raisers". So Bradshaw determined to make good his statement to Paddy about keeping his eyes wide open for any contingency of a serious character that might present itself. He did not propose to stand idly by and permit injury to come to DeWitt Norton nor any other man and he certainly had no intention of letting himself be disposed of to suit the purposes of "Red Mike" Vignon. For Dan felt morally certain that Vignon was back of whatever danger might be threatening.

He pondered such thoughts next day when he was at work in the mine, and he also took note of the fact that when his shift ended, the stope in which he worked and in which the big ore strike had been made was in fit condition for inspection purposes. Therefore, he judged that the next day likely enough would bring De Witt Norton to that part of the workings.

Nor was he mistaken in his conjecture.

Dan was still in the Dry the next morning making

preparations to go underground when the shift boss, Smith, approached him.

"Hang 'round th' station when ye go down", he said to Bradshaw, "an' when I come down with Mr. Norton an' his party, be ready to take us to the new stope an' explain whatever is asked ye 'bout it."

Accordingly, when Dan reached the "1800" of which the stope was a part, he did as he had been instructed and remained at the station, seating himself on a pile of timbers at one side away from the rush of ore car traffic on the turn-sheet, to await the arrival of the Norton party.

Bradshaw never had been afforded opportunity to speak to Norton. In fact, the only sight he ever had obtained of him was when he saw the mine owner proceeding along one of the drifts clad in typical "digging" clothes with battered canvas hat pulled well down on his head. Bradshaw would not have known Norton had he met him on top, for men down in a mine look very different from the way they do on the surface. Like the rest of the citizenry, Dan knew the general facts regarding DeWitt Norton. Dan knew that Norton was a mining man of good theoretical education and much practical experience, and at the age of thirty-six was already a power of increasing magnitude among the important western mining interests; that he and his sister resided in a handsome house on the western edge of the city,—a stately, roomy house, set in the midst of extensive grounds; that, generally, the Nortons spent their winters traveling or in the East where Norton had other interests; and finally that Norton was a keen businessman, fearless, generous in any good cause, personally modest and exceedingly democratic.

"Perty soft fer you, young feller", the good-natured Jackson called to Dan as he deftly whirled a car around at the end of the tracks and rushed it across the turn-sheet. "What did you do,—buy this mine this mornin'?"

Then, as he pushed the empty car to one side, he came over to Dan and stood before him, feet planted widely apart.

"Say Dan", he said in lowered tone, "looks to me as if that Vignon bunch is gittin' too damn strong." He pushed his cap back and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "They'd like to git my goat too if they could. Know why?"

"Why?" asked Bradshaw, his eyes narrowing.

"'Cause I'm fer Dan Bradshaw, that's why. Keep mum 'bout this, Dan, an' keep on the lookout."

Then Jackson went back to his work, as several other men came to the station from the main drift.

A frown contracted Bradshaw's eyebrows.

"Seems as if all my friends want to warn me," he muttered to himself. "I'm going to have to hand it to somebody soon. Somebody's looking for trouble and somebody's going to get it and get it good."

At that moment the sound of the swiftly descending cage came to him, and as Dan arose there was a grinding noise, whereupon the station-tender jumped forward to open the big, double iron doors and then unbar the safety-doors of the cage hanging in the shaft opposite the level. Several figures in "digging" clothes stepped off on the turn-sheet; DeWitt Norton among them.

Bradshaw went forward to meet the party and the shift boss in a few words explained to him the procedure desired. Then, with the shift boss and Dan leading the way, Norton, the superintendent and the foreman of the Mont, followed closely along the main drift and

through cross-cuts and other drifts that formed the way that would take them to where they could climb to the stope which Norton was most desirous of inspecting.

Now and again men passed them, coming and going, or they had to give way to ore trains hurrying back and forth, so that there were others in that part of the mine who knew of the inspecting party's progress.

Nor did Norton and those with him go directly to the stope wherein the new ore strike had been made, but they paused at various places along the route to examine workings or to have new work considered.

In due time they came to the ladder that led up through the manway to the first floor of the stope,—the objective of that morning's careful inspection.

Bradshaw, all along the walk and loiterings, had kept a sharp lookout. From the very moment that he had joined the Norton party, he had determined to leave nothing undone that would enable him to keep watch on every possibility that might be resultant in an accident.

His mining experience made him appreciate the fact that there were many ways in which seeming accidents could be brought about and with the chance of serious results.

There was the chance of drill-steels being dropped down manways; of loose lagging being left so as to cause a fall; of a live-wire sagging so as to electrocute the unwary one; runaway ore cars to be guarded against.

The mere fact of reaching a stope by no means meant safety. In climbing up through manways to stope floors due care was necessary, as Bradshaw well knew.

A rock and timber-littered stope floor might trip a man into an open manway or chute to his death. There were dangers from improper timbering and from blasted ore faces and roofs not properly barred down—Indeed,

from many other conditions that lack of care or disregard for safety or,—so the thought flashed through Bradshaw's mind,—deliberate intent, might cause.

And thinking of these possible contingencies, Bradshaw not only flashed the light of his carbide lamp along the floor of whatever drift or cross-cut they traversed, but from side to side and even along the top.

When they came to the ladder up which they were to go to the stope floor where he had last been drilling, Bradshaw went up first, with Smith following. Then came Norton, and after him the other two officials.

Suddenly Bradshaw stopped short—so short that his legs acted as a buffer for Smith's head. With nerves keenly alert, Dan had been thoroughly alive to every detail as he started up the ladder and when he stopped so abruptly it was because of an unmistakable warning he had received.

"Go back", he called down, and there was that in his voice that made the others obey without question. Men who know what work underground means act promptly in emergencies, if they would save themselves from danger. Otherwise they may pay a costly penalty.

Reaching the bottom of the ladder that footed in the drift, Bradshaw urged the others to hasten along for some distance. He led them into a cross-cut and there he paused. And in that moment they heard the rumble of an explosion.

"Was that up in the stope?" asked Norton sharply.

"It was", answered Bradshaw. "Somebody touched off a 'gopher-hole'". By that he meant that a drill hole shorter than those usually bored, had been loaded with its dynamite charge, fuse inserted, primed and fired.

They waited there a few minutes longer.

"Watson", said Norton to his superintendent crisply, "I think you and Smith had better stay right here and wait for any more evidences of blasting up there, if there are any. The rest of us will go on and take a look at a few other things. Keep an eye on that stope man-way, too. And this 'gopher-hole' business is to be kept under our hats."

In the half hour or so that followed, Dan noticed that the affair of the stope had in no wise disconcerted DeWitt Norton. As they proceeded from place to place along the level, Norton spoke of various affairs pertinent to what they were viewing, but never once of the 'gopher-hole' explosion. Dan formed a real admiration for the man.

"Nothing more doing", the superintendent informed Norton when he and his companions returned to where they had left Watson and Smith. "I think the smoke has cleared away. Want to go back up there?"

"Of course", replied Norton promptly.

And back they went.

"It didn't tear down much", remarked Norton as he went forward to examine the face of the stope, first taking good care to see that no loosened rock was depending from the roof beyond the timbering. "It couldn't have been a heavy charge."

Then he went on with his inspecting, from time to time asking Bradshaw as to the drilling conditions and other matters pertaining to the stope.

At the station, after Watson had signaled for the cage, Norton turned to Dan.

"Bradshaw", he said, and it was the first time Norton had spoken Dan's name, though the latter was well aware that Norton had learned all about him, before coming underground that morning. That was Norton's

way. "I would like to see you at my office as close to four o'clock this afternoon as possible. Smith", Norton turned to the shift boss, "Bradshaw can report off work for the day at noon."

* * * * *

When the twelve o'clock whistles were blowing, Bradshaw came on top and went to the Dry to change his attire. To the surprise of Mrs. Inez Harrity he took his noon lunch at the boarding house, and Paddy Skiff, who was on the "four to twelve" shift, also expressed wonder at seeing Dan.

As soon as lunch was over Paddy called Bradshaw aside. "Anything wrong, lad?" he asked anxiously.

"Not a thing, Paddy", Dan reassured him. "Just have to attend to something down town this afternoon."

"Well whatever 'tis," went on Paddy, "I'm glad to see ye, fer 'tis good news I hav' fer ye." He clutched Dan by the arm and drew him even closer. "Wist! I give the pome to the Missus an'", he paused to regard Dan with twinkling eyes, "she sure give me encouragement. She studied it an' said, 'G'wan ye ol' fool'—but lad, lad, she was smilin' whin she said it."

* * * * *

On his way to the Monticana building where were located the general and private offices of the mining properties in which DeWitt Norton was concerned, Dan meditated on the sudden turn of Fate that had brought him to the emphatic notice of Norton, so powerful a figure in the mining world; a man of strong personality and ideas. If such a man and the men whom Bradshaw accounted his own followers could be brought in ever closer touch, what might not come of it? Would not such a consummation hasten an evolution of wonderful good in itself and of immeasurable benefit as a precept

and precedent? And for what part he might play in such an event, Bradshaw knew he might himself attain to a place enabling him the more to put into practice those plans and theories which he conscientiously held to be entirely altruistic in their purpose. Thus ran his thoughts and they were not unpleasant—on the contrary, they thrilled him to the very core.

A block away from the Monticana building Dan encountered Walton.

"By the Great Horn Spoon!", exclaimed the newspaperman. "As I live and breathe, my young leader of men, my"—

"All of that and more", said Dan in a similar tone of joking friendliness. "I had planned on seeing you anyhow this evening."

"And I was intending to send word to the far-famed hostelry of Mrs. Inez Harrity asking you to come", Walton informed him. "I wanted to see you, Dan, because I'm going away for awhile and I thought you might be willing to inform me of California localities. Incidentally, how comes it you're off shift so early?"

"One thing at a time, friend", said Bradshaw. "First of all—how comes it you're going away?—and secondly, I'm on my way to the Monticana building. Mr. DeWitt Norton and I are to have a consultation."

"Indeed?" Walton elevated his eyebrows. Then he spoke in more serious tone. "Far be it from me, Dan, to pry into your private affairs,—but if it's a fair question might I ask whether you are going up to see Norton on League affairs or otherwise?"

Dan smiled and placed a hand on Walton's shoulder.

"Your question is perfectly fair", he said. "In fact, John, I don't mind admitting that I am unaware of what it's to be for, Norton merely asked me to see him."

"Brave boy", exclaimed Walton resuming his jocular tone, "and you're going up there in broad daylight. What would the proletariat ensemble think of it if it knew that?"

"Maybe envy me. Who knows?"

"Maybe suspect you, you mean. The trouble with the proletariat, my son, is that it is so infernally prone to be suspicious of what it can't understand. I'll expect you at the rooms tonight, sure."

* * * * *

In the reception room of the Mont's general office, Bradshaw went through the formality of sending in his name before being ushered into the inner precincts, only in his case, progress to the private office of DeWitt Norton was made with far greater ease and promptness than was the usual rule with visitors there.

Dan had spent several hours with Norton underground that very morning and yet, at four o'clock that afternoon, in Norton's private office Dan looked on a man who seemed an utter stranger to him—so great is the effect of clothes and environment. He now saw standing beside the room's big, flat-topped mahogany desk a distinguished-looking man of medium height, muscularly built, with a strongly modeled and well-featured face, keen but friendly eyes and wavy hair that was graying at the temples. Such was DeWitt Norton at thirty-six.

"Take a chair, Mr. Bradshaw", he invited courteously, and as Dan sat down, Norton took his place in his swivel-chair behind his desk. "By the way, do you smoke?" he asked opening a desk drawer and taking out a box of cigars which he opened and extended hospitably towards Dan.

"Occasionally, thank you", answered Bradshaw, helping himself to a cigar.

Norton struck a match and handed it to Dan.

"Thanks", said the miner.

Dan liked the "meet-you-like-a-man-and-treat-you-like-a-man" attitude of Norton. It was in keeping with descriptions he had heard of the mine owner's mannerisms. Bradshaw had entered the office determined, at least subconsciously, to resent any patting-on-the-shoulder condescension and the entire absence of anything like that he speedily observed. Covertly Dan studied Norton's face, while the latter lighted his cigar, and he had readily to admit that Norton appeared to be very much of a man's man.

"Bradshaw", began Norton leaning back in his chair, "what mining experience have you had?"

"What I've learned mucking and machine drilling in the Mont", answered Dan.

"You have some idea of the character of ore, haven't you?"

"Oh, to some extent. A man naturally picks up more or less of such information when he works in a mine." Bradshaw smiled. "I think I could distinguish ore from mere country rock underground or on the surface."

Norton puffed at his cigar for a moment or two and then put it down on an ash-tray and looked steadfastly at Bradshaw.

"That is to say, you could tell good from bad ore."

"Sometimes an assay,—a test—is needed even for the most learned in that respect", said Dan steadily, quickly catching the purport of Norton's words. "The most unpromising appearing might sometimes assay surprisingly good—ore, I mean."

"Have you ever tried assaying?" asked Norton.

Bradshaw took his cigar from his mouth.

"Not ore", he responded.

"Men?" asked Norton with a smile.

"Yes", answered Bradshaw evenly. "I think I usually get good returns in assaying men whom I think worth while."

"An ability, I always have thought, that comes in very well in the mining game", said Norton adroitly turning the trend of the talk. "And now let me say most emphatically", the mine owner continued, "that you certainly acted very quickly in an emergency this morning. I know that most men of mining experience ought to be able to smell a burning fuse and know that blasting is threatened. I can detect that kind of danger myself rather quickly and I caught the fuse smoke from the stope this morning an instant after you did, but was very impressed with your presence of mind."

"Thank you", Dan said quietly. "It was a case of move quickly, I thought."

"You thought right", declared the other. "You know and I know that fuses are not lighted until the shift is off and that due warning is given in all directions. Now somebody fixed up that 'gopher-hole' at a time that was in violation of the rules. Somebody set off a timed fuse and got away just before we reached the first ladder of the stope. No warnings, of course, were given. All these things were in direct violation of our strictest rules. We both know that. You know, Bradshaw, that the proposition is being investigated, but quietly." He leaned forward and spoke tersely while gaze met gaze unwaveringly. "Who was wanted—you or me, or both of us?"

Bradshaw's jaw set.

"Why do you ask me?" he questioned sharply.

"Pardon me", said Norton again leaning back in his chair. "Please do not misunderstand me, but you must

realize that I as well as you stood to be injured, though sometimes those 'gopher-shots' are not so very heavy."

"Excuse me, Mr. Norton," Dan hastened to say, for like most quick-tempered men, Bradshaw as quickly regretted any undue hastiness, "I do not mean to misunderstand you and I quite realize the gravity of the affair. Whoever planted that shot and whoever they wanted to get, the fact remains that we were the ones who almost got it, and that, I should imagine, is sufficient basis for the most rigid investigation. If I ever find out who did it, believe me sincerely I'll remove the necessity of any further investigating on your part."

Norton smiled. He had been told that Bradshaw was a good talker.

"I don't mind telling you Bradshaw," Norton went on after a moment, "that Smith is to be transferred to another part of the mine and you are going on as shift boss on that level if you want to."

The offer of promotion very naturally pleased Bradshaw, but at the same time he thought of how such a change in his status might effect the opinion of those he deemed his followers toward him.

"If"—, he began, but Norton interrupted.

"Permit me just this", said the mine owner, and he looked directly at Dan, "—you must not regard any advancement as a reward for I think I can see that you would not accept it on that basis."

"You're right, Mr. Norton", said Bradshaw. "I will be candid with you. If there was any merit in what I did this morning I was actuated as much by a desire for my own safety as that of all the others with me. I couldn't accept any advancement merely because of that."

"And I'll be frank with you Bradshaw", Norton replied. "Your mining experience has been somewhat limited thus far, but you are observant and learn quickly. I want men in official positions in my properties who think fast and act right at the right time because that makes for general efficiency. I am in a way a manufacturer of a certain commodity and the better my working force, the better for the industry and thus for all concerned. That should remove your objection, I think."

Dan got up.

"I've tried to do my best while working for you, Mr. Norton", he said, "and", again he smiled, "I'll try to deliver the goods in future."

Norton stood up and moved over to him. "Report to Mr. Watson," he said, "and good luck, Bradshaw." He held out his hand. "Keep your eyes open."

"Yes, I've been told that often since I began mining", remarked Dan, as he shook hands with his employer.

* * * * *

Walton gave Dan a hearty welcome when the latter reached the newspaperman's rooms that evening.

"Dan my lad, I'm off to California next week. Doctor says I'd better go for a few weeks while the going's good and get the remnants of that bad cold out of my system. Some tough campaigns coming up next spring and I want to be fit to handle them."

"Then you can consider that you're headed for that part of California where my aunt and uncle are", declared Dan. And he took up his argument to such effect that Walton agreed to spend at least a portion of his sojourn there.

Then the miner told his friend of the position of shift boss tendered him, but he did not inform Walton of what had brought him to such favorable notice because

he considered that Norton had exacted a promise of secrecy from those who knew of the premature explosion.

"And so you are to be a shift boss. Good!" Walton congratulated him.

"I don't know whether I ought to take it or not", said Dan slowly.

"Some more of your proletarian scruples", remarked the newspaperman. "Forget that stuff for a little while. Why man, surely it is a fact that even with the proletariat crowd nothing succeeds like success."

"If I thought it would make them listen more to me, I'd take it", was Bradshaw's statement.

"Well, at any rate you must see that in such a position you could be of more material aid in various ways to your proletarian followers", Walton reached for his pipe.

"Coming right down to facts", said Bradshaw, "it is just that very consideration that induces me to take it."

"Dan, you're a wonder", declared Walton settling back comfortably and regarding Bradshaw with an amused look. "Gad, boy, you're a comer, but you ought to broaden your scope. Don't get your perspective from only one direction. Why won't you come with me into circles you would enjoy? Doing that once in awhile wouldn't lessen the strength of your principles any."

"Because, as I have told you before, John", replied Bradshaw, "I wouldn't fit in logically at this time. You know there can't be any jarring of the conventionalities."

"Fiddlesticks!"

"Yes, fiddlesticks if you please. I know that as a prominent journalist—oh yes, prominent, I repeat it—you have the entré into our most select circles and very properly so. You indeed are a man of importance. Mr. DeWitt Norton and his family circle and his other

friends might not care to meet Mr. DeWitt Norton's former mine mucker, erstwhile machine drill man and new shift boss, socially."

"But"—

"Yes I know just what you are about to say, old chap. You want to tell me all about how self-made men are honored and how labor conquers everything and all the rest of it. And your platitudes are true, but you forget that I am in the self-making and not at the 'made' stage yet, and no matter what you or I or broad-minded friends think—and indeed you and I are broad-minded, John, especially on the subject of our own worth—there still are certain social conventionalities and those rules refuse to be jarred."

"If you're not good enough for any of them", Walton exclaimed hotly, "then—"

"They are not good enough for you", Dan finished for him. "I thank you, friend, from the bottom of my palpitating heart for your sentiments, but even you and all your generous ideas cannot change the rules of the game."

Walton reached forward and knocked the ashes from his pipe into the fireplace.

"In some things, Daniel Bradshaw, you"—

"I know", interrupted the miner with a grin, "I make you sick."

CHAPTER IX

WITHIN THE GATES

Walton was sincere in his offer to take Bradshaw with him into those circles in which the newspaperman had established himself by force of his ability, his personality and his ever-increasing importance as an editor. A man of character was Walton and while he recognized those little niceties of conventional society, he despised snobbishness. Bradshaw's employment in a mine, in Walton's opinion, offered not the slightest reason why the miner should be denied the privilege of mingling with that stratum of society to which Bradshaw rightly belonged. Of course the newspaperman was well aware that even in the most exclusive society there were to be found those who neither by reason of character nor any other qualification were worthy of being there, but who through some peculiar accident of Fate, attained to the company of the elect. But Bradshaw was not one of these. Indeed Bradshaw was far superior to many whom Walton had met in the inner precincts of Society.

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On the following evening Walton was a visitor at the DeWitt Norton home. There he always found a wholesome atmosphere. In this beautiful mansion, with its many and well chosen art treasures, prevailed a true spirit of home, a sincerity and a refinement that appealed immensely to Walton.

In the spacious, rug-strewn drawing room with its splendidly designed furniture Walton occupied a corner of a deep, roomy Davenport, while Norton lounged in a comfortable leather arm-chair. The lovely Miss Mary Norton, DeWitt's sister, sat at the grand piano, her fingers lightly caressing the keys while beside her stood another girl, Margaret Hanlon, whose beauty claimed much of Walton's attention. She had a charming voice and at the solicitation of both Norton and Walton, Margaret sang several delightful little songs, while Mary played her accompaniment.

"So you are going to California next Sunday night, Mr. Walton", said Mary Norton, as she moved away from the piano.

"Direct to the Pacific coast", he replied, making room for her on the Davenport beside him.

"And a week from Sunday night DeWitt, Margaret and I leave for New York", Mary went on. "Margaret won't stay with us long though, for she insists on going directly to Palm Beach to join her mother."

"I fear Mother will be wondering what has become of her wandering chee-ild", said Margaret, smilingly. "When you are in California, Mr. Walton, I hope you will find time to write that book you told us about."

The newspaperman looked at her with slightly narrowed eyes. He wondered how sincere was her apparent interest in him. "It's merely in the notion stage at present" he remarked smiling. "I've the idea that Butte offers as good a subject as I possibly could find and I am anxious to try it."

"Indeed yes," exclaimed Norton. "Is it to be a pioneer or a modern day story?"

"A little of both", replied Walton. "The romance of mining, as I think of it, has not gone because mines have become vast enterprises."

"You are right about that", assented Norton. "The game is as full of adventure today as ever, I think."

"Take, for example, the heroism of mine rescues", Mary suggested.

"Think of the tragedies and near-tragedies and other vital dramas enacted far underground", Walton went on enthusiastically.

"Yes", remarked Norton somewhat dryly. "I have thought of them rather frequently."

"And romance", the newspaperman continued. "There is as much individual romance connected with the mining industry today as there ever was, though doubtless of a different sort. It is mighty fascinating, too. You know, I didn't get my information in that regard at second-hand."

"I think your having worked in a mine right here in Butte, Mr. Walton, is most interesting", Margaret said. "Several of the boys with whom I went to school here are mining engineers now. My dad worked in a mine when he was a young man," she added proudly.

"And so did mine", declared Mary.

"And a good miner at that", Norton exclaimed.

"Yes, and after they made their way to fortune", remarked the newspaperman, after a brief pause, "they went on to fame because they were broad-minded, educated men, who continued to educate themselves all the more after they got the fortunes. They stand out heroic and romantic. I know of a man in this town now,—a miner—who is much like that in the making."

"You do?" asked Mary. "Please tell us about him".

Walton laughed. "I'm afraid I might bore you"—

"But we do want you to tell us", Margaret insisted.

"I met him when he first came here", Walton began. "He never had been down a mine before, but he took to mining as a duck takes to water. He is a strong man, physically and mentally and has a good education. In my opinion, he has knightly qualities, but perhaps I am prejudiced in his favor."

"Oh, how really romantic!" exclaimed Mary Norton.

"He is chuck full of the romance of life too", Walton continued. "He started as a mucker—a shoveler, you know, and then worked his way up to a machine-drill man. And he's going higher. He deserves the opportunity to do so. I feel sure that if he had wanted to devote himself to some other line of work affording the chance of quicker advancement, he would have made much more rapid progress."

"Why does he remain where he is?" asked Norton.

"He thinks he has a mission to perform; he's thoroughly sincere about it."

"A mission?" queried Mary.

"Yes, he wants to lead the people with whom he labors, on to a better, higher status by teaching them a different, a better viewpoint".

"He's tackling an immeasurably bigger job than he probably imagines it to be", commented Norton. "The sort of purpose you say he has, Walton, is much as if he were playing with fire—apt to burn a lot of innocent persons and incidentally perish himself in the flames."

"From Mr. Walton's description of him", said Mary slowly, "he would seem to be a modern knight-errant. I know there are men of that kind in the mines. I would like to meet him."

"It would be difficult to get him to enter what he

calls 'the sacred precincts', Miss Norton", Walton informed her.

"Just the same, I might meet him some day", she said. "Do you know,—I rather think I would know him were I to see him—just from what you have told us of him."

"I should judge him to be a strong man", Norton summed up. "Doubtless a man of good brain. But a man of his theories generally has to go through the scorifying process, before he comes out the better, the finer and the greater influence for general good. But a man of that kind often makes a crucible for his own firing and that very fact makes the trial by fire all the more severe. If he survives it, he might become a great man. If he does not, he goes down to the very depths of his crucible, there to be consumed."

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Later, when Norton had left them to answer a telephone message and his sister was in the dining room arranging their little supper, Walton was left alone with Margaret.

"I won't have a chance to see you again for several months," he said, "even if you do come out here again in the Spring."

"I surely expect to be back here then", said the girl.

"It certainly will seem a long winter", Walton sighed.

"But you will be among the sunshine and flowers in California for some of the time", she told him sincerely.

"Just for a small part of the winter", he conceded.

"And you will be busy with your work, won't you?"

A frown passed over Walton's face. "Work is not everything," he said.

"I shall be very disappointed if you do not work on the book," she said earnestly. And for a moment her eyes met his.

CHAPTER X

STORM CLOUDS

On Sunday night, Dan went with Walton to the depot and, as they said goodbye, Walton made Dan reiterate his promise to keep his friend posted on the trend of Butte events.

Returning up town, Dan hesitated between going to League headquarters or to Carty's. In the end he compromised by strolling into Klemner's shop where he encountered Chris, all togged out in his Sunday finery.

"Meelie an' me ve go to show", Chris informed him with a grin.

But Millie was then inclined to veto the plan.

"Oh, we can all stay here and have a kind of a party at home", she ventured blithely.

Chris objected. "Ay got tickets for da show", he insisted.

"You mustn't let me spoil your afternoon", Bradshaw came to his rescue.

The girl tossed her head. "Come on then, Chris", she commanded.

After they had gone, Dan and the shoemaker carried on a desultory conversation while the latter pottered about the shop and Bradshaw turned his attention to the shelf where Klemner kept the files of the paper containing Clairmont's articles. Under a stack of papers there, Dan came on the grammar he had given Millie and

which she must have inadvertently left in that place. He smiled to himself as he glanced through it and noted how very little it had been used.

From Klemner's, Dan made his way towards Carty's. Passing his boarding house he met Paddy Skiff emerging from the hostelry with Mrs. Inez Harrity confidently holding to his sturdy left arm.

"To the movies", announced Paddy with a triumphant grin as they sailed by.

At Carty's, Dan met Jackson.

"Aren't you on night shift since you were transferred to the sixteen-hundred?" asked Dan. "What are you doing—laying off?"

"Layin' off nothin'—laid off", answered Jackson.

Dan took him over to a table and there with 'alf-and-'alf mixtures before them, Jackson told his story.

"It's all on 'spicion, far's I'm concerned", declared Jackson. "I know they're cleanin' out the mine of a lot of the bad stuff, but you see, Dan, where it works bad is that it gives some shift boss who's got it in fer a man a chance to git him—if he wants to."

"Who had it in for you?" asked Bradshaw.

"Smith, I think. He's bin sore at me since he was took out of the eighteen-hundred to make way fer you 'cause he knows I'm a friend of yours. He got a good chance to git me an' I guess he has."

"There are other places", Dan suggested.

"You don't see me worryin'", remarked Jackson, as he reached for his glass. "Only I done good work in the Mont an' it's a raw deal I got."

"You can bet the real higher-ups don't know it", Dan told him. "Who else was fired?"

"Four or five of the boys—four I think—James, Harrington, Dunleavy an' Lands."

"Those boys are all right", declared Bradshaw. "This thing ought to be investigated."

"Yeh, some of the boys say they're goin' to spring it at the League meetin' tomorrow night", Jackson informed him.

Bradshaw frowningly studied the situation.

"If they say they will I suppose they will", he said slowly, "but I really think I could fix it better myself."

"Sure thing you could", Jackson agreed emphatically.

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Millie and Chris returned to Klemner's at a surprisingly early hour. "Oh it was only that same vaudeville show we seen last week", Millie explained to her father. "How long you been here alone?"

"An hour or so", he told her.

"Huh!" she ejaculated. "Seems like Dan Bradshaw ain't got much patience 'round this place any more."

Chris said nothing, but ran his fingers slowly through his thick, tightly curled hair.

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The next evening before the meeting of the League, to which the members were looking forward with such interest because of Bradshaw's scheduled report concerning Wilkins and Snitch, Vignon appeared at Carty's where he drank enough to induce a belligerent mood. At intervals he pounded on the bar and voiced his feelings in the emphatic but rather general term: "To hell with 'em".

Crunch had a place at the bar and he was expatiating on the beauties of Shakespeare to a couple of blear-eyed persons who did not know if Shakespeare had been a writer or was a well-known baseball player. But they urged Crunch to proceed whenever he hesitated.

After a time, Crunch, flushed of face and with abnormally bright eyes, withdrew from the line and made his unsteady way to one of the tables, where he endeavored with much difficulty to mount it. Finally sprawling forward on its top, he managed to gather himself up on all fours and thus he remained peering at those who had turned from the bar to observe his antics. One of the two whom Crunch had been initiating into the delights of the Bard of Avon, regarded him with mock seriousness. "There ain't no such animul", said one facetiously, shaking his head slowly while the other spectators laughed.

But Crunch, with one hand raised, paid no heed to that and began to declaim:

"'Frien's, Rom'ns, coun'rymen, len'
me y'ears;'"

That seemed to arouse Vignon's sense of humor. "Oh ho ho—ears, ears," he roared out in his bull voice.

Crunch, evidently considering that as encouragement, went on more vehemently: "We mus' control situashun."

And that doubtless recalled to Vignon that he was about due at League headquarters for he abruptly strode out, leaving the door open.

Carty came around from back of the bar, wiping his hands on his apron, and grasping Crunch by the coat collar, jerked him from the table and over to a chair in a corner. Then he kicked the door shut—and trade at the bar resumed.

When Vignon reached League headquarters he first encountered a group of members whose chairs formed a semi-circle in front of the seated Cronel. "I have spoken to you of the bourgeois class," Cronel was saying. "Let me further explain". He stretched out a long right arm

so that his big and knobby wrist showed. "In the days of the Reign of Terror which France was undergoing—"

But Vignon did not wait to hear more.

"Hell", he muttered disgustedly, "what's France got to do with it?" Noisily he proceeded along the hall to a favorite place where presently some of his following began to congregate to listen to his sentiments which had become even more viciously candid in the past few days. As he paused, Cronel could be heard declaring his notions to his few devoted followers:

"First came the animal, then savagery, then chattelism and later came feudalism. The present method is just another form of evolution and its got to move on with the rest."

"That guy's the limit", exclaimed Vignon exasperatedly. "He's always yappin' 'bout what's goin' to be done, what kin be done, what might be done, an' never doin' nothin'. With me it's differen'. I'm fer action, direc' action. We're goin' to git what we want or we raise hell—see? Len' me yer ears, you guys"—This phrase produced an effect on his listeners that gratified Vignon, and he resolved to make frequent use of it—"we're after the labor jurisdiction in this town an' we're goin' to git it." Vignon paused. His audience drew their chairs closer to him for this sort of talk pleased it immensely. And as it was still an hour until meeting time, Vignon and his coterie devoted themselves to a discussion of jurisdictional demands to be made. They sneered at Bradshaw's advance to the position of shift boss. But just then Dan came into the hall, and if he heard what they were saying, Bradshaw contented himself with an inward smile. He awaited the psychological moment for denouncing them.

When the meeting was called to order, routine procedure was quickly disposed of and Cronel called for Dan's report.

Bradshaw arose, and a hush came over the meeting.

"Fellow Workers", he began, "I have investigated the Wilkins and Snitch case. They themselves admit twisting off the switch. They"—

"What of it?" called out Vignon. "Is this to be a white-washin' of the comp'ny?"

Dan turned a flushed face in Vignon's direction. "If the interrupting member wants to take personal issue with what I say", Dan shouted in a challenging tone, "he can wait until after the meeting and I'll give him all the"—

"Order, order", Cronel interrupted, pounding on his desk.

There were many growing murmurs around the hall but as Dan spoke there came a silence among the members. Dan said emphatically—even defiantly:

"These two fellows, Wilkins and Snitch, are no good and you know it. They are a disgrace to this or any other organization and their actions bring discredit on us. I move that this League let the matter drop"—

Despite hands that sought to restrain him, Vignon struggled to his feet. Many of his followers stood up with him.

"What the hell kind of talk's that?" bellowed Vignon.

Hands were reached out to draw him back to his chair, but Vignon swung his fist viciously at the nearest member, missing that member's nose by a scant margin.

Other members jumped to their feet and tried to make themselves heard.

There was increasing confusion.

Vignon continued to struggle with those about him.

Bradshaw stood straight and defiant.

Cronel continued to pound on his desk. "Order, order," he shouted.

Vignon shook a fist at Cronel. "I'll git yuh too, yuh nut!" Vignon yelled.

Bradshaw sprang on a chair.

"Shut up, everybody", he shouted above the din of voices, and suddenly there was a cessation of the hubbub while the members regarded him intently.

"How can you fellows get fair play if you don't want to give it?" he demanded with flashing eyes, his face thrust forward at the Vignon contingent. "There's other business to be considered here about damn-sight better men being fired, and they're the ones we want to talk about."

As this was news to the League, it was content to let Bradshaw have the opportunity he wanted to speak. Vignon permitted himself to be drawn back onto his chair.

But at this point, Jackson, the good-natured and usually the very mild, did just what the good-natured and the very mild sometimes do—he lost his temper. Jumping up from his place, near the front of the hall, he began with an emphasis that at once claimed attention.

"Bradshaw's right", he called out. "I'm one of the fellers he's talkin' 'bout now an' I'm speakin' fer the rest of us wat got canned last, an' I'm here to say Bradshaw's good 'nough to do all the investigatin' fer me an' them too."

Jackson sat down and so did Bradshaw when Cronel, now better able to control the situation, rapped on his desk with both hands and again asked for order.

"Comrades", said Cronel, "let's not lose sight of regular business. Let's not be carried away by outbreaks. Let's find out about this new order of business."

In that way Cronel utilized a very opportune means of diverting attention to something of new, and thus of more, interest. And anyhow, the membership had no erroneous ideas as to the merit and importance of Wilkins and Snitch but knew that they had been made subjects of League consideration only because they were creatures of Vignon, and to some extent because their case represented something tangible in affording opposition to what Vignon always spoke of to them as the "system".

"Let us have the information regarding your affair, Comrade Jackson", requested the president.

Jackson got up and made a brief statement of the discharge of the four men and himself, concluding with reiterating that the other four men and he wanted Bradshaw to investigate their case.

In turn each of the other four men arose and substantiated Jackson's statements.

"Does anyone desire to put that in the form of a motion?" asked Cronel.

Jackson formally moved that Bradshaw be chosen the investigator of the new case and the motion was quickly seconded by each of the other four men involved.

Before the vote was called for, Vignon arose. He had himself better in hand now, but he spoke with cutting sarcasm. He scoffed at any investigations by anyone who very evidently, he said, was not in harmony or sympathy with the purposes of the League and who did not intend to be a factor in advancing the organization's cause. He declared that Wilkins and Snitch had afforded the League ample chance to make a stand even to the

extent of fomenting a strike, but that the League's backbone had not grown proportionately with its membership. As for Jackson and the other four men, if they wanted Bradshaw to do the investigating for them he was satisfied, but he was confident that the League's influence and importance already had been threatened by the disposition that had been shown in the investigating of the Wilkins-Snitch case, and that any more disregard of the League's power and purposes would be the organization's ruination. He, for one, did not propose to stand idly by and not raise his voice in protest against the ruining of the League.

He sat down and noisy applause resounded.

Bradshaw arose to reply. He, too, had himself in hand. He expressed himself surprised that any member of the League should try to make it appear that the organization sanctioned lawlessness. He could not see how the League logically could uphold Wilkins and Snitch in what they had done, if the League opposed lawlessness. And certainly the League advocated law and order. Bradshaw was astonished to learn from any member that the League was looking for an excuse to urge a strike. He wanted justice to prevail at all times but he could not understand why the League should favor action that instead of making for work on equitable conditions would tend to deprive the membership of work.

"Wurk, wurk, that's all ye think of is wurk", someone remarked. "We ain't so crazy fer wurk".

Which statement brought a laugh.

Cronel called for the vote.

There was just as much noise when the affirmative vote was shouted out as when the negative vote ensued.

Cronel hesitated, undecided as to what announcement he should make regarding the outcome of the voting. It

looked as if the membership actually intended making sport of him, with the five men concerned and with Bradshaw.

Dan stood up.

"I arise to a point of personal privilege", he said, "and we'll settle this."

The president nodded approvingly, glad to let someone else handle the situation.

"Fellow Workers", began Bradshaw facing the bulk of the membership and talking evenly with a steely quality in his tone, "if there is any member here who thinks I wouldn't give these five men a square deal in investigating their affair or that I wouldn't carry their case right up to the highest official himself,—Norton I mean —because I have their word they didn't deserve what they got, I ask that one to stand up. Or if there is any one here who thinks I haven't given the League a square deal or wouldn't do so, I ask that one to stand up."

He waited.

No one arose.

There was a snicker from a corner of the hall and then a murmur of voices.

Bradshaw turned to Cronel.

"Mr. President, I ask for a decision on the vote."

Cronel rubbed his chin.

More laughter ensued from the body of the hall.

"Let him do it, Cronel," came a voice from somewhere near the back of the room. "Those five guys want him."

"It's their funeral", shouted another.

"Alright, let th' wise guy do it", another called from behind the cover of his hand.

"The 'ayes' appear to have it", decreed Cronel.

Immediately the members began to leave. There was no regular adjournment.

But there were more individual fights that night, inside and outside the League's headquarters, than ever before in its career.

CHAPTER XI

THE GIRL OF THE TRAIN

Immediately on coming off shift the following afternoon Dan went to the Monticana building to present the case of Jackson and the four others to DeWitt Norton, but he found that the mine owner was out of town and was not expected back until the following Saturday.

Bradshaw would have liked to have had a talk with Walton, but as he could not do that he went home to write a letter to his friend.

"I am up against the Direct Actionist element in the League," he wrote in his bold, characteristic hand. "It involves the blind prejudice and unreasoning hatred of Vignon and his gang against any sort of industrial welfare or harmony. Much to my deep regret, some of those Leaguers on whom I counted, have come to have the foolish notion that maybe, after all, Vignon's way might be the more effective. Coarse and loud talking seem to have a lot of influence with his followers. It makes them think there actually is a way for them either to take over all industrial properties or destroy them and start their own. It is too bad that all the League members are in danger of being stigmatized as Direct Actionists. Believe me dear friend, I find it some job trying to steer the League-craft safely over the boiling waters between the Scylla of Direct Actionism and the Charybdis of an as yet unorganized radicalism that also borders on

red anarchy. But if I win out the victory will be all the greater and the sweeter."

Then Dan went on to tell of other things:

"If I am destined not to help humanity's cause in some degree of leadership, at least I may be of service in another way. I am a potential inventor—yes indeed. Ever since that cage accident in the 'See-Saw' mine I have been giving the vitally important subject of safety clutches for mine cages considerable attention, and I think I have hit on a new principle."

Having finished and mailed his letter to Walton, Bradshaw wandered up in the direction of Carty's, but he did not enter the saloon. Instead, he walked on away from the roadway until he was a little above where the Lane and the mine road joined. There he came to a jutting boulder on which he seated himself and looked over the city twinkling out in its night lights, to the far ranges in the last of their eventide glory. A great loneliness swept over him. Through his mind ran hopes and longings. He wanted to be introspective. He wanted to analyze his status. But finally he had to admit to himself that he was weary and what he wanted most was a comforting hand and a soothing voice. How wonderful it would be to meet "The Girl of the Train" in some such purple restfulness as that above the tops of the mountains! With her true, understanding eyes, intently regarding him with almost a maternal solicitude in their clear depths, how comforting it would be to pour out to her his hopes and his fears, his ambitions, his strivings and the longing of his soul to win that success which would make him worthy in her eyes. She would know how hard was the way. She would understand that environment had not changed, could not change that innate quality that was his birthright. And with her to stimu-

late him to every mental and moral effort, how he could work for her, fight for her and succeed for her!

The darkness of the night was all about him and he arose and drew in a full breath. Verily he had been dreaming. But his dream seemed to go with the vanishing purple of evening. Through his mind flashed a curious thought—The only feminine companionship available to him was Millie Klemner.

Dan smiled grimly and went to League headquarters.

Bradshaw was talking to the secretary in the latter's little room when Vignon, accompanied by Wilkins and Snitch, slouched in from the assembly hall. Vignon made as if to talk business with the secretary and then pretended to have observed for the first time since entering the room that Bradshaw was there.

"Havin' some trouble seein' yer frien'" he sneered, for Dan had made it known to some of the members that he had decided to await the return of DeWitt Norton before seeking an adjustment of the case concerning Jackson and the other four.

"I always can see my friends," Bradshaw replied pointedly, but he knew to what Vignon referred.

"Yeh?" remarked Vignon with a swagger of his shoulders as he shifted from one foot to the other. "Maybe some of these days that ain't all you'll see."

But it was the sneering smiles on the faces of Wilkins and Snitch that irritated Dan most.

"I'll ask you to step outside, Vignon", he invited. "You leave your two hobo friends here and we'll go out and settle up."

Wilkins scowled at Bradshaw from what he considered the safe protection of his chief. "Don't go, Mike," he advised Vignon. "Don't take no chances wid 'em—he might knife yuh."

Bradshaw's fist shot out and Wilkins keeled over backwards, toppled across a chair and rolled to the floor. Men came hurriedly from the assembly hall and clustered around the principals. The following instant Bradshaw was ready for Vignon, but the latter only leered at Dan for a moment and then ungraciously nudging Wilkins with his foot ordered him to "git up". Wilkins, with the aid of a chair, managed to get to his feet.

There were sullen mutterings among the spectators and Dan sensed that they were antagonistic to him.

"Yeh—he's beginnin' to use rough stuff", some man at the edge of the surrounding group said just loud enough for Dan to hear.

"Where'd he git the idea he kin hit a guy what don't happenin' to agree with 'im?" another remarked.

Paddy Skiff forced his way through to Dan's side. "Come on—let's take a walk", he prompted, and Bradshaw, slowly turning, shouldered his way through the crowd.

"Fer the sake of commin sense", broke out Paddy when they were beyond the League's doors, "can't ye see Vignon's framin' up all kinds of things fer ye? I'm glad I come when I did. That mixup in there was a plant—a stall to git ye in wrong some more."

"Plant or no plant", Bradshaw answered decisively, "I'd do the same thing over a dozen times. I couldn't let a cur like Wilkins get away with what he said. And Vignon"—

Paddy interrupted him. "Now don't ye go gittin' off wrong on Vignon. He's a fighter all right an' when he didn't jump in an' give ye battle 'twas that he had a reason fer not doin' so. Mind me—Vignon'll go an' go hard when it comes to a fight, Dan, an' ye know it. He sure fixed up that stall in there, I tell ye. He wanted fer

to make it look like ye are a sore-head an' want to run ev'rything in the League to suit yerself. Ye see? He's sendin' ye in wrong with the rest of the bunch."

"Kismet", said Dan philosophically, extending his hands before him.

"What say?" asked Paddy, eyeing him closely.

"Merely,—let it go at that", answered Bradshaw, conclusively.

Bradshaw heard of Norton's return on Saturday. And after he came on top and changed his clothes, Dan went to the Monticana building. But there he was informed that the mine owner was not in his office and was not expected back there that day, as he had completed his Butte business preparatory to leaving for New York. So Dan resolved to go to the Norton home in the evening and endeavor to see the mine owner there. For Bradshaw wanted to rectify the wrong if he could, that he felt had been done Jackson and the other four men in question. Also, he was well aware that if he failed to see Norton after having let it be known he intended to carry the case directly to him, his leadership in the League would be seriously threatened.

On his way from the boarding house that evening, Dan ran into Jackson.

"News fer you, Bradshaw", Jackson greeted him. "Us fellers in that case you're to investigate got jobs today. We wasn't afraid, Dan, that you couldn't get us back in the Mont, but as long as we had a chance to go to work we thought we'd best do it."

"Good for you!" said Bradshaw, "but I've got to go on with the affair because there is a principle involved. It's a matter of justice to the men and to the ownership. I think Norton would appreciate knowing everything that goes on in his properties."

A street car took Dan within a block of the Norton mansion. Soon he was walking briskly up the wide, cement roadway that swept in ample curve around three big trees to a short distance in front of the broad, stone steps leading to the pillared veranda.

In response to his request to see DeWitt Norton, the housemaid who answered the ring of the door-bell, bade him step into the spacious reception hall. There he stood waiting the return of the maid.

She was back in a surprisingly short time.

"Mr. Norton asks that you wait a moment in the library", she told him, conducting him to a big, book-lined room that at once won Dan's heart. He was standing at a book shelf beside the wide and evidently much used fireplace, looking at the titles of the volumes, when the sound of a girl's voice caused him to turn around. As he did so Mary Norton and Margaret Hanlon entered the library from the drawing room. At first they did not see him.

And then for a brief moment Mary Norton was looking straight at Dan Bradshaw. Involuntarily he raised his head, momentarily taken off his guard, for here, indeed, was the girl of the roadway above Carty's—"The Girl of the Train."

For a fleeting instant her eyes widened. And then came a moment of hesitancy—a moment pregnant with possibilities, as the man and the girl looked into each other's eyes.

Words came pounding in Dan's brain.

"Do you know me? Are you glad to see me?" But, slightly bowing his head, he managed: "I beg your pardon—I am waiting for Mr. Norton."

She smiled in the way he so well remembered. "I am sure my brother will be here right away", she said.

Then with a friendly little nod, she stepped back, and with her friend left the room.

On their way upstairs, the two girls met Norton descending.

"Who is the man waiting for you in the library, DeWitt?" demanded his sister.

"His name is Bradshaw", answered Norton.

"The man you said Mr. Walton meant when he told us of his friend in the mine?" she questioned.

"The very same", Norton nodded, as he proceeded down stairs to meet the miner.

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"Romance with a vengeance!" remarked Margaret as she and Mary went to the latter's sitting room. "He doesn't look anything like an anarchist."

"He's not supposed to be one", said Mary. "He's some sort of a labor leader." Then, more slowly; "But if he's really an anarchist he must be one of a new school of anarchy that believes in looking neat and indulging in becoming haircuts."

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Norton greeted Bradshaw in a friendly but very businesslike way. For the mine owner was no novice in the matter of special visits from labor leaders or employes.

"Mr. Norton, I regret having had to disturb you this evening", Dan began, "but I had to see you before you left town. I've come about an injustice to five men who were miners at the Mont." Then he briefly gave the details of the case.

"Isn't this a matter which properly should have been taken up first with the foreman or superintendent of the Mont?" asked Norton coolly, resting his strong, capable hands on the arms of his chair and leaning forward as if to arise. "If they refused to consider the matter, it

would receive my prompt consideration whether you reached me personally or by written communication."

"It is not a question now of the men's reinstatement", said Dan. "They have secured work elsewhere, but there is a principle involved that should be considered."

"And the League is very much concerned in the justice part of the proposition", remarked Norton. "Go on."

"We admit that some men have been discharged for good cause", Dan continued. "In fact there was an investigation as to a couple of them fired from the Golden West for twisting off a switch lever. Maybe you heard of the incident?"

"I did."

"The League was told that those two men deserved to be discharged."

"Who told the League that?"

Bradshaw's eyebrows contracted slightly. "That was a matter of committee report."

Norton smiled slightly. "I see."

"As for these five men now in question, I can vouch for their good character. The point we wish to make is that a mine worker who might incur the enmity of a shift boss could be summarily thrown out of work and perhaps discredited with the other mining companies."

"We want no petty tyrants in the mines", declared Norton, "and we are getting rid of them as quickly as possible. But I still say that you should first have taken this matter up with the foreman or the superintendent, both of whom are just men in every way and are entitled to the courtesy of the first say."

"Mr. Norton, were these five men fired because they are members of the League?" asked Bradshaw.

Norton stood up and the miner did likewise. "I don't like your question", declared the mine owner. "It presupposes coercion and all that sort of thing. But since you've asked that question, I'll ask you one in return. Isn't it so that the League is only a Direct Actionist lodge?"

"Direct Actionist control is what I and those with me are fighting", replied Bradshaw, "and if we are successful in getting justice for League members in some things, we can prevent the Direct Actionists from controlling the League."

"Bradshaw", said Norton emphatically, "you can't convince even yourself that the League is not controlled by the Direct Actionists. Not only are most of its members spouting Direct Actionist ideas in the mines, but actually are trying to practice sabotage with a view to more concerted action of that kind. Direct Actionism is a threat against the welfare of this nation and if it continues, the time must come when the government will have to recognize it as a grave danger and act accordingly."

"I am no Direct Actionist", Bradshaw maintained stoutly.

"Then you're in damn bad company", Norton replied vigorously.

"As long as you suspect me, too", exclaimed Bradshaw, "I may as well say I'm through working for you."

"I never ask a man who works for me what his religion is, how he votes or anything else personal so long as he delivers the goods. I hire his efficiency, that's all. Direct Actionism is unworthy, un-American and tends to disrupt industrial harmony. Your personal purpose may be good, but you are in with a bad lot for

all your altruistic notions, and sometime you may find that out to your regret."

"I'll take that chance", returned Bradshaw. "But I'm not going to stand for dictation."

Norton's nostrils dilated as they had a way of doing when anger mastered him. "I don't want to dictate to you", he said emphatically. "Do as you please. I am entirely too busy to bother about your views or your plans."

Bradshaw retorted with equal heat. "I may not be important to you, but I am very important to myself and I hope to be important to certain others. What I said about being through working for you goes—I'm through." He made a gesture as though sweeping something aside.

Norton reached out, touched a button on the wall, and almost immediately the housemaid appeared in the archway.

"This gentleman is leaving", Norton said crisply.

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Just enough coal was glowing in the grate of the fireplace in Margaret Hanlon's room to cast little stringers of reflection on the opposite wall and cause momentary flickers on burnished mahogany.

Mary Norton was enjoying the comfort of a divan of pillows she had constructed for herself on the furry rug beside Margaret's chaise-lounge facing the fireplace, her feet tucked under her, the tip of a blue Turkish slipper peeping from beneath the edge of her blue silk kimona. Her loosened hair hung, thick and wavy, about her shoulders, framing her charming face with a fluffy aureole in which deepest auburn tints were disclosed by the fire-glow.

As she sat there with such comfortable insouciance, Mary had a certain piquant youthfulness that revealed another phase of her beauty.

"It seems just like a story in a book"—she was saying—"his coming here. You know, Margaret dear, one of my pet illusions now and forever more is gone—For how can I ever again picture an anarchist as I always have done now that my anarchist has come attired in a neat blue suit that fits him, neat shoes, neat tie and with his hair cut most becomingly?"

"And perhaps a bomb in his pocket", Margaret teased, "which he forgets to hurl when overcome by the fair princess he encounters so unexpectedly."

Mary smiled enigmatically. "I could imprison you forever on bread and water for such an idea, Margaret Hanlon!" she exclaimed. "Such a one comes not with a bomb in his pocket, but with weighty platitudes in mind!"

"Perhaps, my princess, perhaps", said Margaret, gazing at the coals with half-closed eyes.

"And the build of him and the strength!" remarked Mary deliberately. "I would like to see him engaged in the masterful feat of knocking down—say—two ruffians."

"And why two, pray?" demanded Margaret.

"Oh, because I should imagine he could do it so completely", replied Mary Norton. And again she smiled her enigmatic smile.

* * * * *

Bradshaw walked to his boarding house with many thoughts racing through his mind. He again had come face to face with the girl who so often had been in his thoughts—and she was Norton's sister, and Dan had quarreled with the mine owner. So, if Mary Norton

knew anything of him at all she, too, might think he was a discordant Direct Actionist. Where had gone all his plans for true leadership?

Dan laughed a short, bitter laugh. How unattainable this girl now seemed and how vain his dreams of her!

Arrived at his room, he divested himself of hat and coat and moving the room's plain wooden table to a place of vantage beneath the single electric drop, Dan took from the table's drawer some papers, ink, pen and ruler, and pulling up a chair, endeavored to engage himself in the task of working out more details of his mine cage safety clutch. But he could not bring the proper concentration to bear on his work. Over and over again he re-enacted in his mind his meeting with Norton's sister in the library of her home—his scene with Norton. He thought of his attempted defense of the League despite his realization of the League's tendency. "I made a melodramatic donkey of myself," he summed it all up. And then he tried again to devote himself to his invention. But Dan was again interrupted. Someone knocked at his door. It was Paddy Skiff, and it was plain from Paddy Skiff's expression that he had news of importance. He came in quickly and closed the door. "Lad," Paddy said excitedly, "there's somethin' poppin' fer sure. Don't disbelieve me. Vignon, Wilkins an' Snitch, the murderin' bunch, has bin plottin' all ev'nin—I heard 'em up at Carty's. They've gone out in direction of Nortin's."

"Quick man—tell me all", Dan commanded, grasping Paddy by the shoulder.

"They was drinkin' some", Paddy went on hurriedly, "an' they was sittin' back of the partition where the wine-room used to be. I was sittin' next the other side

of the partition." Then he continued quickly to tell Bradshaw of the plan he had overheard. "They may be reckless", he finally concluded.

"I think it's all a big bluff", declared Bradshaw, hastily putting on his hat and coat, "but I'm going out there, too—that's the way to save time. No use trying to kick up an alarm now for if anything happens it'll be all over before any general steps can be taken to stop it."

Dan rushed from the boarding house along Working Lane to where the street cars passed and swung himself aboard one bound for the center of the city. Arrived there, Dan jumped into a waiting taxicab and urged defiance of the traffic laws. Half a block from the Norton home he dismissed the taxi and walked quickly towards the house which stood there, a solid refutation of the fears that had been growing within him. He did not turn in at the gateway, but walked past it for a few yards. Then, glancing hastily in either direction along the thoroughfare, Dan pulled himself to the top and let himself down on the other side of the stone wall that separated the Norton grounds from the pavement. He was then amidst some trees which, almost denuded of their midsummer verdure, afforded a very incomplete screen. As he went forward, two sturdy figures moving stealthily along in the shadow of the wall, carefully followed him. In the shadow of a big tree and where a box hedge ran along between Dan and the sweep of lawn that ended in shrubbery, fringing the mansion's abutting conservatory, the miner stopped. The two figures, still masked by the trees, did likewise.

Bradshaw contemplated the house. Lights were burning on the first as well as on the upper floors. The ornamental bronze veranda lamps that flanked the wide oaken doors, were brightly aglow.

There was a night stillness, punctuated now and then by notes of activity that came from the heart of the city and the Hill.

Bradshaw was trying to decide whether or not he had acted foolishly in coming instead of telephoning to Norton, but he blamed his action, if wrong, on his natural man-desire to be present and participate, if need be, in preventing what he feared might occur. He did not want Norton harmed—he would do his best to prevent any sort of outrage for the sake of law and order, for the sake of his own people's welfare,—and—overwhelmingly, because here he would fight and die if need be for the sake of Mary Norton—Yes, that was it. That was the great and paramount consideration—to protect Norton's sister from any chance of harm.

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And at that moment, Vignon, Wilkins and Snitch were seated at a table at Carty's. "There ain't no use tryin' to pull any of that stuff," Vignon was admonishing his companions, "out at a place like that jus' to start somethin' an' throw a scare into a few of 'em 'roun' this town. There's other ways."

* * * * *

As Bradshaw was pondering his next step two powerful figures came quickly up behind him and hurled themselves on him so that he went headlong to the ground. Followed a heart-breaking tussle, but a third man came running across the lawn and the struggle was brought to an end. Presently Bradshaw, with his hands manacled behind his back, was being scrutinized by his three captors in the light of an electric flash lamp.

"We'll take him over to the house and let Mr. Norton have a look at him", announced the man with the light. "Come along."

Bradshaw, recovering from the daze of the brief but fierce mêlée, knew it was useless to resist the order given him.

A few minutes later, the miner once more faced DeWitt Norton in the library from which he had departed in anger but two hours before. Bradshaw caught the glint of a revolver handle in the pocket of Norton's bath-robe.

When Norton saw the prisoner, he started in surprise. "You did all right, boys, but take off his handcuffs and leave him here with me," Norton ordered, much to the amazement of the three captors.

"But Mr."—began the spokesman of the trio, who had taken Bradshaw. The mine-owner was quick to interrupt him. "It's all right, Chief—just leave him with me. I can take care of myself and I want to have a talk with him."

"He may be armed", suggested the "Chief", as he removed the handcuffs from the miner's wrists.

"I am not armed," Bradshaw said quickly.

"Go ahead, boys—and many thanks", said Norton, following the three captors as they reluctantly withdrew to the front door.

Bradshaw was standing just where Norton had left him when the mine owner returned.

"Well—what is it, Bradshaw?" demanded Norton.

And Dan told him, quietly, briefly and, as he hoped, convincingly while the mine owner listened intently. "I'll accept what you say," Norton said finally. "I feel under some obligation to you—at least, to that extent. Don't think I've forgotten your presence of mind in that 'gopher-hole' affair."

Unexpectedly Mary Norton appeared in the reception hall archway of the library.

"What is it DeWitt?" she asked, coming quickly over to her brother. "I heard scuffling and then a little later the front door closing. So I decided to come down and investigate for myself." As she spoke she looked in surprise at the disheveled miner.

"Mr. Bradshaw and I are talking", Norton said gently. "You run along upstairs. There is no excitement whatever."

"Of course not being a child", Mary declared with some asperity, "I can see there has been something unusual here. What is it?" And as she spoke, Bradshaw noted the striking similarity of facial strength between brother and sister.

"Merely this"—Norton concisely sketched the circumstances of Bradshaw's return to the house, his capture and his presence in the library. "Mr. Bradshaw is at liberty to go just as soon as I can tell the Chief", he finished.

Mary laid a hand on Norton's arm. "Mr. Bradshaw", she said, "once saved me from annoyance up on the mine road."

"Apparently the Norton family is under considerable obligation to you, Bradshaw", observed Norton dryly as he stepped over to the library table and pressed a button. Almost at once a door opened and closed, and the man designated as the "Chief" came into the room.

"This man", Norton said, indicating Bradshaw, "is leaving now. See that he is not annoyed."

The "Chief" nodded, and withdrew.

"Concerning your expressed determination about employment", said Norton to Dan—"that is optional with you."

So, a second time that night, Dan Bradshaw left the house of DeWitt Norton in a very unsettled state of mind.

After the miner had reached the thoroughfare, the "Chief" returned to the library where Norton was awaiting him. "He's well along on his way now, Mr. Norton", he reported. "I'm sorry if we"—

"You and your men acted very promptly", Norton cut in.

"I'm glad our work suits you", said the other with a smile.

"Do you know him?" asked Norton.

"No."

"Then forget all about his having been here."

Mary was waiting at the head of the stairs when her brother came up.

"Well Mary", he said, "now our young man of the hot-headed disposition has gone away with the notion that we employ armed guards here at night just because the watchmen we have when the house is closed came to work a day sooner than usual. For the sake of my reputation I was almost tempted to let him know the truth, but I thought it would not be a bad idea for the impression to prevail that no outrages can be perpetrated here."

"You really do think he meant to perform a valuable service, don't you?" she asked.

Norton rubbed his chin reflectively. "At his age", he said slowly, "I too, had quite an appreciation of the dramatic. If there is any benefit of a doubt we might give it to him, I suppose."

Bradshaw went directly to Carty's. And as he walked slowly along he contemplated himself bitterly. What a fool he had made of himself! What a ridiculous figure he must have been to her—the girl for whose

sake, after all, he had been led into his mistake. No doubt Norton did not believe his story of why he had returned to the house. Perhaps even the girl suspected that he had fabricated his account of a threatened outrage so that he could pose as a hero and thus try to win the mine owner's favor. And the more Bradshaw pondered on the latter theory, the more distorted became his perspective. He swallowed several burning drinks of whisky. Had not Norton tossed him immunity from arrest as a bone might have been tossed to a dog?

So thought this man of temporarily illogical reasoning. He felt abashed, humiliated and resentful. And what was it Norton had said about retaining his position? Did not that merely mean that if he chose to remain at work in the Mont, Norton would tolerate him there? Well—he wouldn't stay in the Mont. He wouldn't be treated that way.

And what it is that makes a man—strong mentally and physically—for a brief period, lose entire grip on himself when trying in stress of abnormal mental processes to return to a more rational and logical reasoning by an illogical method, is something that is obscured in the inner recesses of man-nature. That is to say that in trying to steady himself that night, Dan Bradshaw for the first and last time in his life, drank to fearful excess.

Through the mystic hours of the night shadows from midnight to dawn when forces for good and evil sometimes seem to struggle for mastery, this now unseeing, unheeding, reason-bereft man wandered pitifully through the dark. Nor when day came did he report for duty at the Mont, nor ever again thereafter did he work there.

For when daylight began to pencil a thin, grayish line at the top of the Great Divide and a glimmering of reason returned to Dan Bradshaw, he, disordered in appearance, in body and mind, stumbled to his room, threw himself on his bed—and sank into unconsciousness.

CHAPTER XII

DOLDRUMS

Bradshaw drifted aimlessly between Carty's saloon and Klemner's shop.

At the shoemaker's Dan would sit with his head in his hands. And while Millie was pleased that Bradshaw's visits no longer involved the tedium of grammar lesson discussions, she wished he would act less like the chief mourner at a funeral. However, several times Millie made tea for him and insisted on his drinking it.

Once, when idly regarding her over his tea cup, Dan wondered if men who had been inspired by Mary Nortons, ever came to be content with Millie Klemners. He speculated on what manner of drag she might be to a man who would and could work his way to great success and then immediately he felt a keen disgust with himself. All he had done in the past week had been to secure a rustling card from one of the mining companies. When Millie took the empty cup from him, their fingers touched, but Dan merely looked down and smiled to himself. Soon afterwards he left.

"She's a damn fine animal", he remarked to himself outside the door.

At Carty's Dan met Paddy Skiff who evidently had been waiting for him. Paddy conducted him to a corner table and when they were seated, Paddy regarded Bradshaw intently.

"Lad, what's the matter with ye?" he asked almost softly.

Dan looked at him with raised eyebrows. "Do you observe anything unusual in me, my inquiring friend?" he questioned somewhat indolently. "If so, let us discuss it over a social 'alf-and-'alf."

Paddy tapped on the table. "Listen", he commanded, "there's a dom sight more important business right now fer ye than 'alf-and-'alves."

"Some more contemplated outrages?" asked Bradshaw drawlingly and smiled.

"Now don't get yer dander up, me boy", returned Paddy. "Dan, ye must sand yer track fer yer slippin' fast. There's need of ye if the League is to be saved an' a lot of trouble to be prevented. The League's goin' to infernal blazes like a shot."

"And with my compliments", declared Bradshaw. Then he called the floor boy and ordered drinks for Paddy and himself.

While there was no disposition on the part of the League at its next meeting to give Bradshaw much credit for having presented the case of Jackson and the four others to Norton, yet the fact that Bradshaw had left his place as shift boss in the Mont and gone to mucking for another company checked much of the criticism that otherwise might have been directed at him.

Dan did not tell of what had transpired between Norton and himself and the League understood that their meeting had been a very quiet, formal affair. The members also noted that when Bradshaw made his report it was not with his quondam energetic, upstanding way. Having made his report, Dan lapsed into moody silence. The session over, Dan went to his room where he sat

wearily on the edge of his bed, his head in his hands. Soon Paddy Skiff came in with a letter from Walton.

"Vignon's gettin' fierce", he remarked, after Dan had read his letter. "He's braggin' of how he's done fer you in the League, an' he's makin' some raw cracks as to startin' trouble or a strike or somethin'."

Something of his former alertness showed in Bradshaw's demeanor as he sat up straight. "He's doing that, is he?"

Paddy's eyes sparkled at the other's renewed animation. "Sure", he declared, "there's somethin' brewin'."

And Paddy Skiff was right. Not only was there something brewing, but that very night it bubbled over.

A group of figures stealing up under cover of darkness to a mine gate brought a challenge from a watchman, who, without more ado, fired his revolver. A fusillade came back at him and other guards came running to the watchman's aid, whereupon the approaching group broke and ran down the hill, leaving a wounded watchman, a gunny sack containing several sticks of dynamite, some detonating caps and fuse.

The news spread quickly by word of mouth before there could be a newspaper account of it, and naturally rumor exaggerated its import. The entire affair not only was abortive, but the very apparent hopelessness of the success of any such attempt made it look suspiciously as though it had been planned with an ulterior motive.

Paddy Skiff woke Bradshaw out of a sound sleep to tell him about it.

"An' now let me say this"—Paddy spoke emphatically—"I have the inner certainty that if Vignon an' his gang kin cause the impression—Oh dom it man", he broke out, "Vignon wants yer scalp. Yer the stumblin'

block in his way. Why, only tonight I heard he's bin spreadin' the dope that ye've bin a dangerous sore-head ever since ye left the Mont, an' I was told that 'tis his plan first to git ye in bad an' took out of the way an' then make the League a real branch of the national Direc' Action organization. Fer a week I bin tryin' to make ye see reason an' make ye be the grand fightin' man ye was before."

An expression of resolve showed on Bradshaw's face. "We'll have the cards on the table at tomorrow night's meeting of the League", he said tersely. "There ought to be some more fight left in me."

"Lad,—Lad, I could hug ye fer them words!" exclaimed Paddy, his eyes sparkling.

"Meantime", remarked Bradshaw, "I must be fortified by the sleep of the just and the weary."

Paddy held up his hands in a gesture of patient resignation—and left Bradshaw to return to his slumbers.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TEMPEST

"This is the idea, Paddy:—no man with half an ounce of decency is going to stand for outrages."

Bradshaw, pouring frequent libations of 'alf-and-'alf on the altar of his devotion to decency, was speaking to Paddy Skiff across their favorite table at Carty's.

"Those in the League, as it now stands", he went on, "who want the sort of thing that was tried last night when that watchman was shot, want to make a criminal band out of an organization that ought to represent entirely different purposes if it's going to exist at all. You and I know from what we've heard today that many persons suspect the League of harboring the perpetrators of last night's outrage. We can't stand for it. My idea, Paddy, is a reorganization of the League cutting out all the Direct Actionists."

"Also ye best be cuttin' out some of the lubrication yer after oilin' yer ideas with", said Paddy.

Bradshaw refused to grow angered at his friend. "Positively Paddy, you're nothing but a croaker—a downright croaker", he said in what he meant to be a bantering tone. Trust me to be at the League meeting tonight and start something."

Paddy looked quizzically at him. "Startin' is yer strong point these days, me Laddie—but kin ye finish? Aye, that's it—kin any of us finish?" and Paddy heaved

a sigh as his thoughts reverted to the buxom and highly independent Mrs. Inez Harrity.

Leaving Carty's, Bradshaw left the devoted swain at the boarding house door and continued on to see if he could meet Cronel at Klemner's, as the League's president frequently could be found at the shop at that time of day.

Much as Bradshaw had lost that clear and hard-headed mental grasp of himself;—much as he really was being tortured in the fiery crucible of his own making,—he was angered and disgusted by what had come about in League affairs. Dan was disillusioned as to its status. He believed that his reorganization plan alone would save the League.

While Millie Klemner waited patiently in the little dining room, now and then darting a look through the open doorway into the shop, Bradshaw was outlining his reorganization idea to Cronel and Klemner. Dan argued that by this time the police authorities must be watching the League and League headquarters, and that a better declaration of principles was imperative. He proposed not only to call together the conservative members to effect the new organization and the positive exclusion of Direct Actionists, but he decided also to change its title. Still, there was a lack of coherency in Dan's method of presenting his theories regarding the subject that detracted materially from the force of his arguments. Even to himself, Bradshaw admitted that he certainly was not at his best in the explanation of his new organization plans.

After an hour or more of argument Bradshaw left the shoemaker's place. He was not at all pleased that his plans had not been heartily acclaimed by Cronel and

Klemner. Their reason for not doing so, Klemner voiced to Cronel after Dan had gone.

"He's got the right notion about getting rid of the members who are against law and order," said Klemner, "but Dan Bradshaw, as you can see, is not quite himself. He's got the making of a forceful leader, but I'm afraid that right now he can't hold the membership together. If he starts something at the meeting it will be a hot session."

Cronel agreed with the shoemaker.

In truth, there was a tenseness in evidence that presaged coming excitement before Cronel called the League meeting to order that night. There was a preponderance of virulent Direct Actionists, very officious in their claims as to what they proposed to do, and fewer than ever of that element of which Bradshaw had been the accredited head. Conservative members were absent for a variety of reasons. Those of them who were married and had acquired little homes, let wifely counsel stimulate their own inclination to stay away from the meeting. Others feared the League was under a surveillance that was becoming keener all the time, for the mining companies, as well as the officers of the law were not unaware of the necessity of trying to reach the very fountain-head of the abortive attempt to carry Direct Action to either a very serious culmination or to encourage more such actions which might be dangerous for employes and destructive to property anywhere. Still others were weary of the organization which, they decided, was leading nowhere as it became more and more apparent that not even Bradshaw was able to control it.

Vignon sat where he could command a good view of the members. He almost crouched forward—like a tiger awaiting the moment to spring on its prey.

Bradshaw, with Paddy Skiff and Jackson, took their seats in the center of the hall in the very midst of the Direct Actionists from whom Dan wanted to wrest the League.

Routine business dispensed with, Bradshaw purposely permitted Vignon to begin proceedings with advocacy of the scheme to have the League become affiliated with the national Direct Actionist organization.

As when on a day in summer there appears within a fleecy cloud-mass a black core that finally envelops it and flash after flash of lightning whips out before the tempest sweeps down until there seems a temporary overthrow of Nature's stability—a cosmic chaos—so did this meeting come rapidly to where darkest basic emotions enveloped it. The flashings of the then-engendered virulence made a clashing, primitive, unreckoning chaos of order. The pent-up menaces of feelings, of long fermenting ideas, burst all restraining bonds.

Men voiced Direct Action that meant the worst of destructive radicalism.

Cronel sought in vain to stem the swirling, foaming, reckless maelstrom of Direct Actionist outpourings. He pounded on his desk.

"Vignon, springing up, shook his fist in Cronel's face. "Go an' rot you fool!" he shrieked. "Go to hell!"

Bradshaw, with blazing eyes, with head erect and once more radiating that force of personality that previously had distinguished him in trying situations, sprang on a chair and demanded attention. There came a brief lull in the maddened, boiling confusion while all eyes were turned inquiringly towards him. Quickly he took advantage of his chance, commanding undivided attention. He called on the members to retain their reason. He flayed Direct Actionism's attempt to win the

League's affiliation. And then it was to him as if the meeting faded from his view and he was striving to climb up a steep hill to Mary Norton, standing on its summit. The way, it seemed, was over fearful, jagged rocks and, if he meant to reach her he must toil, he must overcome the menacing obstacles before he could win victory. The vision faded and he was pouring out burning words to the men about him. He was fighting his fight as if the girl of the vision were there smiling encouragement at him and bidding him fight and triumph.

"No Direct Action"—he told them—"no radicalism, no socialism that demands the immediate overturning of social and all other conditions, can or ever will aid you, make you men as men were meant to be. But the exercising of your best manhood, the expression of your best thoughts that really make for proper procedure, the acts of men who are right, who are true, are your safeguards, your best guides, your salvation in the economic struggles all men must face. Good citizenship"—he spoke as though he might have been reading from a prepared paper, so smooth and sure was the flow of his words—"Good citizenship means the performance of duty as it should be performed. It means being American. It means the upholding of law and order,—of the preservation of all those principles which make for progress and decency and equity. If you destroy industry you destroy yourselves. If you practice sabotage you take a big step backwards towards savagery. When you have rights you can demand them, but in the right way and at the opportune time. Destruction does not bring rights. Destruction of property, of industry cannot bring better economic conditions. If you have political wrongs, then most certainly the destruction of government could be no cure for them. The ways and means of properly

eliminating such wrongs are provided. The proper righting of any wrong is provided. You froth about wanting to abolish the wage system and you offer nothing but utmost confusion—chaotic turmoil in its place. I ask you to be part of a right-thinking and right-seeking citizenry. Be not misled by damnable Direct Actionism! Be men!—Not rending, destroying, reasonless beasts!"

They listened to him with the sort of breathlessness that they would have manifested had a wave of cold water struck them unexpectedly. But as they began to recover from the shock of his verbal attack, so, too, did the tide turn against him.

Cronel sensed it. Jackson felt it. Paddy Skiff suspected it. Bradshaw knew it.

But he talked on with a desperation born of the hope that his eloquence, his reasoning and the fact that he was right, might sway them, turn them, bring them to him with new enthusiasm because of the light that might pierce the obscurity of their mental confusion. He had never been so much himself as he was right then. He never had spoken so to them from his heart, from his very soul. The power of the super-force which actuated him was then communicated to them, and at one psychological instant he might have won, and won gloriously. For crowd-psychology is a remarkable thing—its anger is gossamer and chrome steel—it melts at a fiery word, or resists a white-hot furnace, and as for the heart of it—it is kind and enthusiastic to the point of effusiveness, while it is merciless as an Inquisition.

The very first hesitancy in Bradshaw's speaking—his first inadvertant groping for a powerful phrase, sentence, word—his first raising of his eyes from the crowd

before him—and his spell was as a cobweb to be brushed aside with a single impatient gesture.

Vignon pushed his way towards Bradshaw and a hundred tongues began to clamor.

Dan was interrupted. He lost his power to reclaim attention and was literally swept off his chair.

There was a fierce, rough surging as when anger, uncertainty and desire for a different sort of action make a crowd churn about and express itself in an inarticulate, positive, menacing rumble—the Voice of the Mob.

A dozen hands elevated Vignon to the top of Cronel's desk and supported him there while he, bending forward, poured out the vials of his hatred, when the League ceased its movement and noise to listen to him.

Vignon spoke with the rough masterfulness of the coarse, uncouth but forceful evil entity he was. He used words that were cunningly naive. His sarcasm was the more effective because it seared. His sophistry was the more appealing to those there who wanted his talk because of the false strength of its appeal to their real desires.

He abused them, scorned them, lashed them to fury. He called them "slaves" and "groun' down dogs" and "nawthin' but lumps a mud tuh be kicked 'round"—done with the well-calculated idea of bringing them to a high pitch of anger, not against himself, of course, but against those who, as Vignon insisted, were opposing their theories and methods. For so to arouse them was a vital part of the strategy of the sophistry with which he was misleading them the more. And he climaxed his tirade with an appeal for their support.

The frenzy of some of them was that of the camp-meeting self-hypnosis so that a man so possessed jumped on a chair and shouted;

"Le's go an' burn 'em all up."

Another urged that they parade and that struck most of them with favor. To parade, to march through thoroughfares—that was it—the same spirit that impelled the march of the frenzied populace in Paris in the Reign of Terror—the desire to move, to express a violent emotion by marching such as from time immemorial has been one of the mob's chief expressions—an impulse to sweep on, shouting and threatening and seemingly unaware of its locomotion, but driven on by a turmoil of an inward seething purpose to proceed onward,—onward to no special destination.

Vignon sprang from his perch.

The members again were moving en masse.

Crunch, who had made his way to Bradshaw's side, was jostled about in front of Vignon. One of the latter's coterie aimed a wide-swinging blow at Crunch which would have been disastrous for him had it landed, but Bradshaw quickly stepped in and, warding off the blow, struck out straight from the shoulder and sent the assailant reeling unconscious against Vignon.

Crunch spoke quickly and with carrying clearness to Bradshaw.

"Another favor for which I owe you return", he said sincerely, before he was swept aside in the rush at Bradshaw that followed.

What the stalwart miner had not been able to express in forceful words, he exultantly did with the might of his good, strong arms. He went into the combat with a fierce joyousness, shooting out his fists with no lack of skill, toppling over attackers as they came. But in countering a blow which Vignon struck at him with one of his huge, gnarled fists, Dan missed Vignon's jaw by a hair-breadth.

Paddy Skiff, Jackson and even Cronel, unmindful of whatever physical harm might threaten them, put forth heroic efforts to get to Bradshaw's side for, indeed, Dan was becoming a central point for the few who wanted to stay the maddened crowd from leaving the hall for a street demonstration that would be sure to result in a losing clash with the authorities. It was no such motive, however, that actuated Bradshaw. All his fighting instinct, all his grievance against thick-headed and stupid opposition, all his antagonism against insane Direct Actionism and anarchy, prompted him—making of him a dangerous fighting man, one who wanted only to hit and punish those striving to down him.

Paddy Skiff and Jackson, too, were doing yeoman service.

Cronel bumped against Vignon. The latter cursed him and with a snarl crashed a blow against the socialist's face that deprived him of his senses.

With Bradshaw and three of his friends battling desperately to protect them, Paddy Skiff and Jackson dragged the form of Cronel to one side and propped him up on a chair just as Cronel was opening his eyes. A blood smear was across his left cheek and he was very white—but he was smiling.

Soon the mêlée became even more general. It was, in truth, a disorganized mob fight, where many personal enmities were fought out. It became a time for the settling of old scores—and the starting of new ones.

And, in that din of heaving, fighting men, there was struck the death knell of the League.

From just outside the front doors suddenly came the shrilling of a police whistle.

"Th' cops!" cried a voice.

Hostilities ceased almost in an instant. Men began rushing for the exits. Some plunged through windows. The hall began to clear quickly.

Such is the inherent desire to escape arrest.

At the front and rear of the hall, hastening members encountered policemen entering and sharp tilts ensued because of Leaguers' efforts to get away.

A police patrol automobile came clanging up, and then went clanging away.

How he got there, Bradshaw could not exactly tell, but he found himself with Paddy Skiff and Jackson in the shadow of a building near the one in which the hall was located. The sounds of battle in front of League headquarters were rapidly diminishing.

Then the fighting ended and but a few policemen remained in the neighborhood. The League hall looked as if a very severe storm had swept through it.

Bradshaw, Paddy and Jackson took hasty counsel together.

"We had better separate and then meet up at Carty's", was Dan's persistent suggestion, to which both of the others finally agreed, although Paddy preferred going to the boarding house.

Paddy and Jackson walked to the corner, where stood the building that housed what was left of League headquarters, and there Paddy turned up towards Working Lane while Jackson went on for another block before he, too, turned northward.

Bradshaw went in the opposite direction. Then through various side streets and avenues he worked his way towards Carty's.

As Bradshaw entered Working Lane, three men also bound for the saloon, saw the miner. The biggest and burliest of the trio clutched his companions and drew

them back into shadow for a moment before they cautiously followed Bradshaw.

That Dan would have to cross a set of railroad tracks and close beside a looming water tank before he could reach Carty's evidently was known to the trio, for, with the burly man in the lead, the three darted in between two houses to an alley, hastened through it and emerged in the very shadow of the water tank.

So when Bradshaw came there, a sharp blow on the head from a billet stretched him unconscious on the ground.

The burliest of the trio gave the prostrate form a thudding kick on the side and involuntarily one of his companions exclaimed "Oh Vignon!" as if in protest.

"Shut yer damn face", growled the man addressed. "Here's our chance to railroad this guy an' do it right. Come on now."

They picked up the unconscious form and carried it quickly along beside the railroad track, safe from observance because of the shadows to which they kept.

A hundred feet away stood a string of empty steel ore gondolas. At their farther end were two box cars. The three halted with their burden at the first box car. Then, while the other two half-supported the limp body of Bradshaw, Vignon pushed open the car door. To hoist Bradshaw into the car, drag him to one end of it, then get out and push to the door was the work of a few minutes.

After that, the three made their way back to Working Lane and walked up to Carty's saloon.

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A switchman, swinging a globe of light from the front board of a puffing switch engine, signaled the engineer to back the locomotive down the tracks and

around a curve that led to the water tank at Working Lane. Obeying orders, the engineer slowed down his engine's speed as it approached two box cars attached to a string of empty steel ore gondolas. Then, when near enough, the switchman jumped agilely from his place and ran to make the coupling.

Buffer of switch engine met buffer of box car and, as a clattering shiver ran through the string of cars, the switchman deftly dropped the coupling-pin into proper position and stepped back. He swung his lantern, and two blurred notes came in answer from the engine's whistle. Then, as the locomotive strained forward, the switchman jumped nimbly to the hand-holds on the side of the car and climbed to its roof.

The engine went puffing up the grade to the switching yards, the two box cars and empty ore gondolas creaking dismally behind it. . . .

CHAPTER XIV

WILLIAMS

Vignon did not go to work next morning. He loitered at Carty's, and presently Wilkins and Snitch gravitated to that place. They found Vignon drinking at the bar and without a word edged up beside him. Finally he deigned to notice them, and swallowing at a gulp the contents of the whiskey glass before him, he indicated with a motion of his head that they were to follow him to a corner table. When they were seated there, he leaned over and spoke in a low but emphatic tone.

"We made one grand little mistake last night—one damn fool break. Railroadin' that bird Bradshaw may not help our game none. What we should of done was let him stay in town and play his string. He was gettin' through fast anyhow and then with me showin' that he was responsible for breakin' up the League—say, he'd bin a dead one here sure enough. Now s'posin' he picks up and blows back here. Why he's liable to make a hero out of himself tellin' how he was jumped on and half-murdered all for the sake of the League. Bah!"

"Sure", assented Wilkins. "I t'ought of that too."

"Yeah, but you was too busy to say anything", sneered Vignon. "Well, there ain't no use, my hearties, howlin' over spilt beer....all we can do now is help this idea along that I got well started already 'bout his bein' the real cause for the League bustin' an' how with him

out of the way it could go along better than ever." He rose and pounded on the table. "Why, damn him anyhow! It was him that broke up the League just when I got it goin' my way—just when I could of done some good with it—him and his fool notions and his mush talk against direc' action. The damn fool!"

Several others, who also regarded Vignon as the right sort of leader, drew near to listen, their presence spurring Vignon on to utter rabid radicalisms.

His little audience nodded approvingly when he scored what he and his listeners considered good points. And his harkening admirers never for a moment paused to ponder on how unsound were his direct action advocacies with all too much of this radical's own motives in them; how ridiculous his plan with its illogical start, course and destination. Like many another extreme radical, Vignon demanded changes of a most radical sort and argued against established institutions, but had absolutely nothing to offer in their places. Those who hung so eagerly on his words, very evidently did not see that he really was an advocate of disorganization and a creator of serious new problems—that he was an impediment in the way of progress instead of anything like an aid to it.

Vignon wound up his tirade with some more abuse of Bradshaw, and Snitch remarked, "I wonder where that guy Bradshaw's got to now." Whereupon Vignon's glowering look plainly warned him to refrain from any more comment of the kind.

But at that moment, Dan Bradshaw could not have satisfied Snitch's curiosity had the latter been with him.

After having been thrown into the car, Dan remained unconscious for several hours. Then he rallied a bit and realized a forward and backward jolting—the

cars were being switched around in the yards. Following that momentary glimmer of consciousness, he sank into a deep stupor that lasted a long time. When finally he regained his senses, he was puzzled and totally unaware of his location. He was stiff and sore and the top of his head throbbed painfully. He carefully felt the top of his head and knew that it had been badly bruised, but there had been no bleeding. In the ensuing hour he pieced together the events that had preceded the assault on him in the shadow of the water tank and what likely enough had happened after that. And a great rage welled up in him. He clinched his hands and was for going at once to search for Vignon to strangle him, but there came a quick revulsion of his flaming anger, for he felt very ill physically, and he grew desperately sick in spirit. He closed his eyes and after a time drifted off into a semi-doze which was disturbed by the shunting of the car. Next, the fact dawned on him that the continuous roaring that had been in his ears had ceased and that the jolting motion had ended. The cars had been sidetracked and had stopped.

The door of Dan's car was pushed back and a big brakeman entered, peering about. He discovered Bradshaw propped up in a corner.

"Well, well", exclaimed the brakeman, his hands on his hips and bending forward to inspect Bradshaw, "from the looks of the other cars I thought I wasn't to find any passenger at all on this trip—an' here you are. Hey bum whatcha doin' in here?"

Bradshaw resented the greeting, but felt too weak to argue the matter, so he merely answered wearily, "just resting."

"You can't rest in here", and then the brakeman spoke in slightly lower tone, "unless—", and he paused.

Bradshaw pretended not to understand the more than implied request for tribute.

"Where are we, brakie?"

"Too far from the pandhandlin' districts of Butte to suit you, I guess", was the ungracious response. "We're half way up the Red Flower valley and this string of empties is sidetracked here for a few minutes. If you want to go on to the end of the line you'll have to come across."

Bradshaw studied his situation. He must have been unconscious and in a semi-stupor for at least twelve hours since leaving Butte and now he was on a branch line running up one of the state's most famous valleys a considerable distance from Butte. He had no money with him. He resolved to get out on the chance of there being a habitation nearby where he could procure something to eat, rather than try to prevail on the brakie for a free ride farther along.

"Well, come on—you goin' to sleep?" demanded the brakeman impatiently.

"I guess this is where we part company", remarked Bradshaw arising stiffly. He made his rather unsteady way to the door and looked out—and the brakeman drew back a big foot and kicked Dan Bradshaw out into a dry ditch beside the railroad's right of way.

Thereupon this humiliated man, forgetful entirely of his one-time high hopes, thinking not at all of his manhood, turned where he had fallen and cursed the brakeman with deep, bitter oaths—cursed him with all the intensity of bitterness of an unnerved, unmannerly being who knew himself to be sinking into the very slime and ooze of degradation. Even in the days when Bradshaw had temporarily lost his grip on himself in his fight in Butte, he still had been able to inspire some respect for

his person. Antagonized as his motives might have been, no one had then ventured to give him anything less than honorable battle, respecting his prowess and his innate manliness.

The brakeman did not even accord him that honor. He merely laughed tauntingly and climbed to the roof of the car.

Presently the sharp edge of Bradshaw's anger was worn dull. Almost apathetically he picked himself up and moved over to the nearby water-tank where he swallowed great draughts of brackish water, and then, sitting down slowly, he leaned against one of the tank's supports to rest and perhaps summon up enough determination to see a rift in the clouds settling down over his soul.

Soon the string of box cars moved on their way and he was the only human being in that vicinity.

It was late in the Fall, just after the pleasantness of the Autumn and before the coming of winter. It was that dull, drab, fortunately brief period that is like the mournfulness of the half hour at the end of a winter day and just before the coming of early evening, when it seems as though Nature, herself, were pausing to yawn. Even that locality, in summer so beautiful and in winter at least picturesque, was forlorn looking to this degraded man—was unfriendly to the point of seeming antagonism.

He got up and, slowly climbing the railroad fence, crossed a field and walked towards a farm-house on the other side of a well-defined roadway. It appeared a properly kept place with its large, well-painted dwelling, big barns and other evidences of farming prosperity near it. When he reached a small grove near the house, Bradshaw stopped and looked down at his clothes. His

suit was dusty and torn. He felt his chin and knew that his stubble of whiskers did not add favorably to his appearance. And with a rush the realization came to him that he looked like a hobo and that in attitude of mind he was practically just that. The thought almost took his breath away—it was the one thing then that might have permitted his submerging self-respect to assert itself, but the feeling passed as quickly as it had come. He leaned against a tree and contemplated the house. One idea projected itself with peculiar vividness and persistency on his mental screen. It was as though he thought it so intensely that actually he was seeing the thought instead of merely thinking it. And that strangely visualized thought was that he had just about reached the bottom—that he was right down on the muddy, oozy, engulfing loam of life's sea. That thought brought others of like character. He had not made good. To get to the status where he was hit on the head, thrown into a box car and railroaded out of town and then kicked out into a ditch—verily, was a fine finish for a man with ambitions, with dreams! And now another thought—why, he really had been sinking into the depths all the time he had thought he was rising to the surface!

But it was the present that most concerned him. Two courses, he felt, were open to him. He could go up to the farm-house and beg a meal like any true bum, or he could ask for work even if the only reward for it might be a small hand-out of food.

And as he was weighing these two ways, a third, a sinister, really shameful plan presented itself to him. How easy it would be, if he got the lay of the place, to get into the house at night and help himself to what he wanted! At that moment he was almost engulfed in the slime of the very bottom. The fact that he could give

even a few minutes to figuring out how he might get into the house in such a way and for such purpose, was emphatic indication of where he was morally and mentally just then. He had to make a quick decision, and nothing was farther from his mind than to make excuses for himself. He craved food and rest. And he was glad of only one thing—that he was far away from Butte. He felt like something hunted, as if he wanted to hide for all time from those he had known and places that had known him. Doubtless he would not have been much if at all noticed in Butte, but he had the exaggerated notion that all Butte was after him. He had been going the pace too fast, and even long-enduring Nature was rebelling. Then it puzzled him that, in such a moment, recollection of his aunt and uncle, all unsuspecting of his downfall, of Walton and others—of Mary Norton—should come to him, but he could not think logically of them either. They all seemed to blend into one mental picture—and somehow, someway, he felt more comforted, more sustained. Then and there he made his first struggle to rise from the slime, and none too soon.

He walked over to the farm-house to beg for something to eat. He knocked at the door, and a woman, middle-aged but with surprisingly trustful eyes of almost girlish clearness, opened it. But he did not beg for food. He asked if he could split some wood for a meal. She regarded him for the space of two brief moments and told him to gather up a little kindling and bring it in, when she would give him something to eat. So, a few minutes later, he was occupying a hard kitchen chair that seemed marvelously comfortable to him. As he ate the generous meal she placed on the wide deal table, to which he had drawn his chair at her invitation, a

heavy-set, bearded man entered and nodded to him in not unfriendly greeting.

Fortified by the food, and a mite more hopeful, Bradshaw turned suddenly and spoke to the other man.

"Do you suppose a man might get work around here?"

The other looked up from the straps he was arranging on a horse collar.

"Looking for work?" he countered.

"Yes."

"Ever do farm work?"

"No."

"Well, there ain't much farm work this time of the year, but I might use a man for chores. It ain't much of a job, but it'll tide a man over. Tully's my name."

"Mine is 'Williams,'" Bradshaw lied deliberately. "I'll take the job."

So it was that Dan Bradshaw came to Tully's there to serve as man of all work. It meant food and a snug place in a room next to the hayloft to sleep in. It meant plenty of work from early hours until nightfall.

After the first few weeks, Bradshaw was back in proper physical condition again. He began to think more of what had happened and yet he felt a mental lassitude, an apathy, as to what his career in Butte had been and what had come of it. He was as close as a man like Bradshaw ever possibly could get to being more a thing and less a man.

Finally the spell of winter broke. Came days of sunshine, a gradual disappearing of the snow, a reawakening of the earth. One bright morning a vivid blue-bird alighted on a fence near him and Bradshaw, pausing in his work, looked up to see the newly ploughed earth, the

thin haze veiling the mountains, the tint of the sky. Spring had come.

Thereafter a new feeling was born in Bradshaw, a stirring of new life such as the clod, that has remained dormant all winter, must feel as the springtime warms it to the heart. Not long thereafter he told Tully he had decided to leave.

"Dissatisfied with your treatment?" asked the farmer.

"No."

"Just want a change", and he laughed. "Most of you boys do when the spring comes."

"Oh, it's not that", Bradshaw said with more spirit than he had suspected he retained. "I hear that men are wanted over on the irrigation project across the valley and the pay is good. I thought I'd like to tackle it."

"That speaks well for you, Williams—it's the right spirit", declared Tully.

That day Bradshaw drew what money was due him, and en route to the irrigation project, stopped in the valley's largest town and opened a bank account. He bought a few articles of clothing and continued on to where the main ditch of the irrigation project was being dug. There he applied for a job. He felt far better than he had for many weeks past. Ambition was rising in him like the irrespressible sap in a sturdy tree.

He grew less taciturn as he labored in the ditch and began taking more interest in his fellow ditch-diggers. He even manifested interest when he heard of prospectors bringing in good ore samples from the mountains to the east and southeast, and his talk about mining was intelligent. Those in the ditch crew, who obtained ore specimens, brought them to him for his inspection. They soon came to value his opinion.

He scrupulously saved his money and otherwise manifested steadiness as well as working ability that drew the attention of the ditch foreman. Bradshaw was advanced to the position of gang boss.

And then, alluring, demanding, irresistible, came to him the call of the mountains and his soul expanded in the new light that flooded him.

CHAPTER XV

THE MOUNTAINS SUMMON

Summertime with its accompanying mellow warmth was upon the valley. The delightful region was in its full seasonal bloom. There was the ineffable thrill of indulgent Nature at her summery best. There was silent hum of action—the noiseless, active energy of growing things.

The widespread fields of grain were adorned with over-lapping shades of deep greens and warm, soft browns that flowed into each other with rippling, slow motion when touched by each gentle zephyr. And those utilitarian fields of beauty swept in easy undulations up to the bench-lands that, too, were covered with their summer verdure and were as swelling bases for the grandly towering ranges that hedged the noble valley.

The river, winding on a broad and gentle course, was limpid blue flecked with silver.

Along and atop the bench-lands at the east ran the long, twisting new-earth scar of a great irrigation project, dotted at intervals with the little camps of the ditch workers and the tent stables of heavy, amazingly strong work horses.

From each of these little camps, pathways joined the wide, well-kept highway that traversed the valley lengthwise and into which ran the various lanes and smaller roads that afforded means of communication between

farm homes and hamlets and the more important town to the south, which the encircling mountains seemed finally to enfold.

Down the pathway that led in turning and gradual descent from one of the ditch camps to the main highway, came a man with free, swinging stride, as one long accustomed to hillside paths. His gray corduroy trousers, supported by a leather-strap belt, and his blue flannel shirt, open at the throat with the collar edges turned in, disclosing his strong, bronzed neck, was not without its picturesqueness. His shoes thick-soled and serviceable, were of the kind the ditch diggers wore. His broad, stiff-brimmed hat of cowboy style, was drawn down in front to shade his eyes so that the upper part of his face was in shadow, but his close-cropped beard did not conceal the strong set of his jaw. Over one arm he carried his corduroy coat, and under the other a small bundle.

Pausing on the last foot-hill before he came to the floor of the valley, he turned and looked back, his glance sweeping up beyond the irrigation ditch to the mountains shimmering under a blue-black haze, and then his look became more intent as though, while studying the ranges, he also was busy with thoughts other than of the view, yet having much to do with what he saw.

Turning again and continuing down the pathway, he came to the main road and along its grassy edge began his walk towards the nearest of the valley's hamlets.

Presently into this rather well-traveled artery, there ambled a pair of plump, indifferent horses drawing a light spring-wagon and driven by the middle-aged owner of one of the valley's thriving farms. When the farmer arrived opposite the trudging man, he reined in his team.

"Goin' to Cross-roads?" asked the farmer. "Give you a lift ef you are."

The other man stepped over to the wagon.

"Thanks", he said, and climbed to a place beside the driver.

"Wall, it'll save you a leetle walk enyhow", remarked the farmer and, jerking slightly on the reins, he made a chirping lip-sound to which the horses responded with a resumption of their ambling gait.

"Saves me a walk of three miles", agreed the passenger with a smile.

"Bin workin' on the big ditch?" queried the farmer.

"Yes."

"Thought so."

Several times during the interval of silence that followed, the farmer glanced at the man beside him. Finally he again asked a question.

"Didn' I see you over to Tully's durin' the winter en early spring?"

"You might have seen me there", the other responded affably. "I worked for Mr. Tully all last winter and part of the spring."

"He's got a fine ranch", commented the farmer. "He's a good man to work for too. Pays 'bout the biggest farm wages 'roun' here. Did you like workin' on the big ditch better 'n farm work?"

"Can't say that either was easy, but it was the question of pay that took me to the ditch."

"I guess the ditch comp'ny has had a hard time to git all the men it wants", continued the farmer. "I guess that's why it pays such good wages."

"I guess", agreed the other.

"I guess now thet some of the men have bin workin'

for a few months en have got money ahead, they'll be hikin' for town."

"I guess."

"I guess you're glad to be goin' somewhere 'sides to a ditch camp ev'ry night."

"I guess."

"Ever bin in Butte?"

The passenger glanced sharply from beneath his hat brim at the farmer.

"Yes", he answered, and he saw the farmer was guileless.

"My son was there a month ago", the farmer went on. "He sez it's great—street cars en ev'rything. I guess they's most a hundred thousan' people or more there."

"Good guess."

"He sez the mines look great. I calkalate on seein' Butte en the mines some day. Ever seen 'em?"

"Yes."

The farmer regarded the other with more interest.

"Mebbe you kin tell me 'bout them copper mines", he suggested. "They dig a hole en git the copper out—don't they?"

"That's right."

"When they git all the copper out of that hole do they go over en dig 'nother hole en git the copper out of that?"

"In a way—yes."

"Wall, what I want to know is"—the farmer faced the other man directly—"does the first hole fill up agin some way with copper?"

Because of his down-pulled hat brim, much of the passenger's facial expression was hidden. He merely said, "Not exactly."

The farmer devoted attention to his ambling horses, threatening them with dire but unmeant catastrophe if they did not keep to the road.

"Ef what I heard down at Jethro's store at Cross-roads is right", he said to his passenger, "we'll have a reg'lar Butte right up in them hills some day." With his whip he pointed towards the ranges up beyond the irrigation ditch.

The other directed a momentary but keen glance at him before he spoke.

"Have they found any more ore up in those mountains lately?" he asked.

"Say, how long since you bin down to Cross-roads?"

"About two weeks."

"Didn' you hear eny minin' talk 'roun' Jethro's? Didn' you see eny of the ore specimens that was brought in by some of the prospectors who come over the ranges from the Big Hole Country?"

"Yes, I saw them", replied the other. "I just was wondering if you had heard of any more such specimens being brought in—and from where."

"Nope—ain't heard nothin' new of the kind", replied the farmer. "I guess there's goin' to be lots of activity over 'n them hills some day. They ain't so turrible far from other good minin' places that's already bin foun' en that my son's told me 'bout. Yes sir—I guess some great mines might be foun' over 'n them ranges somewhere."

"I guess."

They came at last to Cross-roads where, at Jethro's, the erstwhile passenger was host to the farmer to the extent of several glasses of cider, after which he strolled over to the box of ore specimens on a keg near the door and casually picked up one or two of them.

The sound of a locomotive whistle caused him to re-

place the ore in the box and step outside. The railroad platform was only a few rods from the store and he was there on the arrival of the branch train that was to take him to the town of rapidly approaching city proportions and mannerisms far to the south, where the ranges seemed to enfold.

Arrived at his destination, Bradshaw went first to a barber shop, and when he left it his appearance was greatly improved. His hair was much shorter and his beard trimmed in Vandyke style. He was indeed a stalwart figure with a light, easy carriage despite his broad shoulders, for he disclosed a lithesomeness which the coarseness of his attire could not conceal.

He went to a small bank on a corner and, at the teller's window, presided over by the cashier, he asked as to his account.

The cashier-teller quickly secured the information. "Two hundred dollars to your credit, Mr. Williams."

The other took a slip of paper from his pocket.

"I have an Irrigation company order—can I deposit it?" he asked.

"Oh yes—we'll save you the trouble of cashing it at the company's office."

"It's only for a hundred dollars", said the other man, and he made out a deposit slip. "I'm going away for a while and may check out some from time to time."

"Send 'em along", returned the cashier-teller cordially.

From the bank, Dan proceeded to a side street where stood a livery-stable. Entering the "office", he spoke to the proprietor.

"If you remember, I was here a couple of weeks ago", he said, "looking at a burro you had."

"Yes, I remember", said the livery man. "We still

have the critter. It's a good little animal, an' faithful, too. Jus' the kind a man would want to take out in the hills. Want to look at it?"

Fifteen minutes later, Dan gave the livery-stable proprietor a check and then left his new four-footed acquisition to await his promised return early the next morning.

Four minutes after he had gone, the livery man presented the check at the bank and found it cashable.

Meantime, Dan betook himself to a general merchandise store, where he made purchases of groceries and clothes. He also bought several articles of hardware including a "Dutch oven", a new rifle, an automatic revolver, a hammerless five-shooter, a fishing line, some plain and fly-hooks, and then a pack-saddle outfit. All his purchases he had conveyed to the livery-stable which housed his burro.

Next he went to a stationer's store where he bought several blank mine location notices, a fountain pen, a tablet, envelopes and some stamps. From there his way led to a restaurant, and subsequently to an accustomed hostelry where he secured lodging.

He drew the room's small table over to a window to get the benefit of the fast-fading light and wrote two letters and filled out a check which he placed in one of the missives bearing the address of his aunt and uncle in California.

Returning from the postoffice, he asked the landlord to rouse him at five o'clock next morning—and went to bed.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SLIP ON THE DIKE

Misty vapor was still hovering over the river, light haze was on mountain sides and over the far reaches of the valley when, as the early sunbeams were flooding over the tree-etched summits of the eastern ranges, Dan stopped the impatient, laden little burro, beside which he had been tramping up the first grades of the slopes that finally grew to the towering mountains at the south-east, and looked back over the valley from which he had come. His costume was the same as on the preceding day, but he had replaced his ditch-digging shoes with almost knee-high mining boots, laced from instep to top.

Already the town from which he had made his start was in the distance, and the atmosphere of the higher mountains was beginning to manifest itself to him.

For only a few minutes he stood there, a hand resting on the pack of the burro, looking back at the valley. Then he slapped the little animal jovially on the flank.

"Don Quixote, my friend, forward to the charge!" he exclaimed. "'Onward and upward' is our motto. If I said it in Latin to you, it would be but Greek to thine expressive ears!"

The burro looked around at him and raised his ears as if in inquiry.

"'Onward and upward', boy", commanded the man, "and then in due time a luxurious meal of grass for you

and a short-order dinner for me. Heigh-ho, boy, get along!"

So onward and windingly upward they made their way until the cool recesses of the mountain side encompassed them.

Long shadows, following close on the heels of daylight, were slipping over the mountains when man and burro attained the summit of the first range. And there camp was made. The man busied himself near his sprightly little camp fire with the preparations for his evening meal, while nearby the burro, lightened of its load, contentedly munched bunch-grass. And after the man had partaken of his supper, he cleaned his cooking utensils at a little spring, carefully extinguished his fire, and filled his pipe.

The man looked at the mountain tops and the sunset as one lost in his own dreaming.

Far down and away, the valley he had left was blurring in a soft, eventide dusk. The river was all dull silver now. Across, on the opposite side of the valley, the range tops were outlined by the light of the setting sun, the mountain slopes below them already beginning to take on the deep purple hues of evening. The sunset was one of western glory. As the sun sank lower, the clouds over the far-side ranges became tinged with rosy fire, deepening in tone as it spread from the cloud edges, until the entire cloud mass was a glowing, seemingly smoldering heap of crimson, gradually cooling into mauve, with then the long, lower clouds like yellow-gold fillets binding the brow of the Evening goddess.

Suddenly Bradshaw turned to regard the serrated ranges beyond the one on which he was standing. They were being covered by the velvet pall of night. In among them, the little valleys, the gorges, the hollows

and canyons far below were in gloom, but the apparently endless succession of peaks and ridges and jagged outline summits were still tipped with the glow of the setting sun. With their rough, bold lines and smooth, towering, snow-capped points they might, in that light, have been the gigantic, leaping billows of a fearfully angered sea suddenly metamorphosed into varicolored stone.

The friendly burro walked over to the man's side and, with ears forward, peered at the scene which Dan was beholding as if in a way it, too, appreciated the magnificence of the view.

Dan put a hand on the animal's neck.

"Remarkable place, Don Quixote", he said, and the burro waggled an ear. "Wonderful sight—what? There's some sort of quotation about, '—Alps on Alps arise'—I don't suppose you remember it. Well, it really must have been some such sight as this that inspired it."

The burro threw back its head with a high motion and saluted the world with a hearty bray. Then it resumed its grass-munching.

With a laugh, the man proceeded to make his arrangements for the night.

* * * * *

So, in the ensuing days, the man and the burro wandered farther into the mountain country, living splendidly in the open—peaceful at night beneath the myriad stars that glorified the heavens. Once in a while there came to them the tinkle of a cowbell from some far valley, but they did not encounter humans.

If the burro was ever puzzled by the man's meanderings, philosophically it appeared not to take heed of them. It seemed a matter of indifference to Don Quixote whether the man insisted on their plodding up mountain

sides, through forests, along cliff-walled canyons, on range summits, across mountain table-lands, camping wherever nightfall found them, or whether the man left his faithful companion securely picketed and then scaled rocky outcroppings, chipping off bits of rock here and there with a stout geological hammer. Also Don Quixote, though he liked companionship, nevertheless was unconcerned as to whether the man devoted time to one-sided talks with him after the day's wanderings were over, or, maintaining tight-lipped silence, examined the rock specimens which he had collected and carried along in a bag slung from his shoulder, until the fading light made such scrutiny impossible.

One evening the man took counsel with himself by the method of expressing his thoughts aloud in the direction of Don Quixote, who now and again ceased munching the abundant mountain grass to raise his head a little and look at the man as if to say:

"Go on, old chap, don't mind my eating as you talk. I am getting all you are saying and, indeed, I quite agree with you."

And the man was saying, "We'll give this locality another whirl, my contented companion of the trail, and then if there is nothing stirring we'll hit straight out for another region I have in mind. Maybe we'd run into something better there. And here's the proposition, pure and simple—if we can't find what we want there, then—don't look at me so appealingly, my friend, as if fearing a dire ultimatum, for necessity makes me say these words in all candor—we, perforce, must part company and it will be me for the far, frosty north—that is to say, Alaska."

Don Quixote shook his head, presumably to discour-

age the gnats, and then gave his entire attention to the grass.

"Well, if it's all the same to you, I guess I'll turn in", remarked Dan, knocking the ashes from his pipe.

The next morning they were up with the birds. The morning air was wonderfully laden with the fragrant breath of the pines, redolent of clean, grass-covered, flower-adorned and tree-protected mountain slopes—gratifying, invigorating, stimulating.

Bradshaw reveled in this great out-of-doors life. It contented the longing within him for a summertime outing in the hills—that longing that comes to every mountain man, no matter what part of the mountainous West is best known to him. Wherever he goes—in his own country or in foreign lands, wherever he might be—where are the memories of the departed glories of the ancients, or in modern cities amid the glories of the moderns—the lure of the mountains—which is really the summons of the great West—is strong for him in the days of summer, so that, if possible, he hies himself back to where he can see them, be among them, breathe their air, be re-invigorated by them. To him they are not mere scenery. He does not regard them as objects of geological mischance to be viewed indifferently, perhaps commented on—and forgotten. But they live and have a voice for him. They have moods. They frown and they smile benignly. They have a sort of humanness that he understands. He knows them as symbols of strength, of encouragement, and possessed of awe-inspiring beauty. And knowing them so, they indeed are a solace to his soul—emphasizing the vastness of life's big things and the littleness of life's foibles.

The western mountains—great, rugged, picturesque, magnificent—thrill and encourage with their grandeur.

They bring the men and the women, who know and understand them, back to them from every corner of the world to quiet jangled nerves, to revive jaded appetites and restore lost illusions—to put the soul once more in harmony with the Infinite.

And this western man, who was searching for a precious secret locked in the bosom of this mountain land—he, too, was under the spell of the mountains and fain would have remained in them for the sake of the joy of living they gave, but he had decided not to linger among them if the search he was so diligently making was unrewarded, for he had come to them this time with another impelling motive that he hoped to make not only resultant of a great new success, but also a vindication of other aspirations.

The man and the burro gradually had been retracing their course, though by a very different path, and they were now no great distance from the town, though not at all where they could see it. The next day, they came to a narrow, natural trail that led around a somewhat precipitous mountain side and up and over a ridge that was as the frontier of a less explored region. Sometimes they were out in the open where the mountain side was carpeted with brush and bunch-grass. Then they would enter a thickly wooded swale with the trees tall and solemn above them, with pine needles thick beneath their feet and lacy ferns interlacing in multitudinous patterns. And often in the very midst of such woodlands they would emerge into a treeless little park that was nothing more than a natural clearing in the woods, covered with a riot of wild-flowers and dappled with the golden sunlight that filtered through the foliage of the trees at its edge—where there was a hush of Nature, a beautiful intensity of peace, cathedral-like,

while the colors were as the refractions of wonderfully tinted temple windows.

Leaving one of these park-like places, they came almost abruptly on a rocky, ridge-like projection, as if a rock-rib had been ruthlessly pushed through the grassy covering. No foot of man seemed ever before to have disturbed this mountain fastness.

They were picking their way carefully over this rough outcropping when the man, stepping on what he had thought to be a knobby projection, scarcely had time to realize that it was a bit of loose stone before he was thrown off his balance and would have experienced a jarring, if not far more serious fall over the edge of the dike, had it not been that he retained his grip on Don Quixote's halter rope, while the wise and far more sure-footed burro, looking quickly around at the clatter, braced himself firmly and securely. Thus saved, the man was able to get sufficient toe hold on the rocks to aid in drawing himself up to the animal. But when he regained a place of safety, Dan did something which might have mystified the burro had the latter been capable of realizing mystery, for apparently intent on plunging himself once more into danger, he got down flat and wormed his way almost over the identical edge, down which he would have fallen a few moments before, had it not been for Don Quixote's sturdiness and the strength of the halter rope.

Reaching downward, Dan chipped off several pieces of rock from that part of the ledge which his recent slipping had somewhat broken, and worked his way back beside the burro. Each of the specimens he had secured, he broke into smaller pieces in the palm of his hand with his prospecting hammer—so decomposed by mineralization were they. Evidently satisfied by his scrutiny of

the broken specimens, which he slowly turned over and over, he dropped them, and taking the halter rein, led Don Quixote to safe ground at the end of the dike where he picketed the burro and removed its load. Don Quixote watched him with speculative eye as Dan took a measuring tape from his supply kit and began pacing off certain distances around the outcropping until he disappeared from sight of the burro among the trees. After an interval, Bradshaw returned and replaced the tape in the kit. He then chopped down a small tree, removed its branches and caused it to stand upright near the dike by planting it in the ground and piling rocks around its base. Next he emptied one of his small supply boxes and fastened it at the top of the pole he had erected so that the box would form a little shelter for whatever he might place in it. Seemingly pleased with the preparations he thus far had made, he took a blank mine location notice from its place in the pack and with his fountain pen proceeded to fill it in. That done, he fastened the location notice in the little shelter he had arranged on the pole. He next brought a pick and shovel from his outfit and marked off a rectangular space on the ground where he was to excavate sufficiently for location purposes.

Don Quixote came nosing inquisitively up to Dan, and the latter jovially slapped the burro on the neck.

"Old Sport!" he exclaimed—"I hope you don't mind my calling you that—it looks as if we might be in on something good!"

A few days later, Dan entered the office of the clerk and recorder in the town from which he had started and duly complied with all the legal requirements for recording the location of the "M. N." quartz lode claim. And while Don Quixote ate his fill of oats and hay in the

livery stable, Dan took several ore specimens to an assayer.

Early the next morning, Bradshaw called for the assay returns and then went to the bank where he had deposited his money, but as it was not yet open he proceeded to the livery stable where he engaged the proprietor in conversation anent the hauling of ore, the fixing of mountain roads and other such matters. Later, when the bank had opened, Dan returned and had a lengthy talk with the bank's president, an alert and enterprising man.

In the afternoon, Bradshaw made his way via rented automobile to one of the irrigation project camps, where he engaged the services of two ditch diggers who were ready to leave their work for something of a different and more promising character.

There is a romance in the business of mining that no words can express. The mining game is the cleanest, most diverting and most fascinating gamble that the laws of Chance ever have devised for mankind. It is indeed a creator of industry. It greatly aids humanity's progress without in the slightest depriving humanity of what it already possesses. It may mean the attainment of ambition's most vivid hopes, or it may condemn to unrequited longings. The history of any important mining discovery is a story not only of romance, but of daring, of adventure, of devotion to duty and of unremitting faith.

All such factors contributed to the unfolding history of the "M. N." mine and the continuing disclosure of its remarkably rich veins.

Before the snows of the winter following its discovery had come to blanket the mountain region with white, there was a very practical hoisting plant, consisting

chiefly of a wooden gallows frame and a wooden engine house protecting an energetic gasoline hoist, also a busy little stamp-mill and a small huddle of miners' and mill-men's cabins on the hill slope just above the dike where, one summer afternoon, a man had slipped and fallen and saved himself by clinging to the halter rope of a steady and sturdy little burro.

The product of the stamp-mill was adding to the growing bank reserve of D. Williams, enabling him to begin the rapid repayment, with interest, of the loan he had received from the banker who had manifested proper faith in the "M. N."

One day in the late Fall of the year in which he had located the "M. N.", Bradshaw mounted his horse and rode to town where he made sundry purchases of clothes in which he lost no time in arraying himself. That evening he was a passenger for a city sixty miles away —the nearest on the main line of the railroad. The following morning, this tanned, bearded and vigorous-looking man, neat in his new blue suit and soft, gray shirt with loosely knotted tie, with new shoes of a style and quality that indulged his liking for good foot-wear, and with his new stiff-brimmed cowboy hat pulled down over his eyes, took his place in the observation car of a famous "through" train that was to take him to the destination printed on his ticket—Butte.

CHAPTER XVII

THE RETURN

John Walton, adding to his editorial repute with a successful novel, was pursuing a busy career of newspaper work and book-writing, with gratifying success. He had few intimate friendships, and those were of the understanding kind.

On the evening of the day on which Bradshaw had boarded the "through" train for Butte, Walton was a visitor at the Norton home. There he encountered Gerald Tharny, suave and preserving his veneer of smiling friendliness.

Tharny maintained a rather elaborate mining office in Butte. For the past year he had been the Montana representative of a big Spokane mining syndicate. He enjoyed a certain popularity in business circles and was accounted a good "filler-in" at parties and dinners. He was of medium height, not bulky, nor yet thin, and carried himself erect. His features were regular, his eyes a bit too narrow, his hair brushed back with satiny precision, and he had a small, neat mustache. He had a fund of ready talk—of athletic events, of travel and the like. With pretended modesty he never failed to seek plenty of self-advertising.

Tharny never overlooked an opportunity to impress Mary Norton favorably. His always well-groomed appearance, his careful thoughtfulness regarding her in all

those little matters which a woman so readily notices, and his seeming devotion to her, indeed had won the very friendly consideration of this unspoiled girl.

Walton did not like him. Trained by his profession in the ability to make quick and keen analysis of men and women, the newspaperman in mind had classified Tharny as "a first class four-flusher", a snob at heart and a sharper in disposition.

In the course of the evening's conversation, the talk had come to a consideration of the then harmonious conditions in the mining city.

"I never have seen times so good here as right now", Norton was saying. "There has come a period in the swing around the circle of Butte's affairs, as I think of it, when all is peace, harmony and progress."

"We have been rather free from agitators", remarked Tharny.

"Doubtless that accounts for our peaceful status right now", returned Norton. "I think that self-appointed reformers and radicalists of the anarchistic and ultra-socialistic type frequently are led by their biased views of what should be done into pernicious radicalisms merely in order to try to gain their own ends. There is all too often an utter lack of sincerity because of there being so much of the personal entity in their actions and hopes."

"There is great truth in that", declared Walton. "The professional reformer, encouraged by success in one direction, plunges in to attempt the immediate rectification of what he considers abuses in other things, and is apt to become the exponent of an intolerance that is not only the expression of merely captious ideas, but a hindrance to really worthy endeavors. The red-anarchist thinks red, sees red and acts that way. He wants de-

struction of government, of any and everything that has semblance of organization except his own. After all, he wants nothing other than very special privileges for himself. And the socialist may be prone to going off on the tangent of socialistic standard. He often injects the personal entity to a very marked degree. He wants all temperaments, all human ideas and methods subjugated to the rule-of-thumb principles he lays down."

"It does seem", said Mary Norton slowly, "as if there can be such surfeit even of good conditions, of progress and perhaps happiness that the contraries must arise to accentuate, as it were, the goodness or joy of the blessings—just as storm accentuates sunshine, and darkness emphasizes the light, and evil impresses the world with the value of goodness."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Tharny. "A mighty well expressed idea!"

DeWitt Norton laughed and looked fondly at his charming sister.

"Quite as good as a novelist might have said it—eh, Walton?"

"Many times better than most of them", Tharny hastened to add.

"You two are teasing me now", said Mary with a slight pout, but her eyes seemed to smile. "Mr. Walton, you say in your book—"

But the writer interrupted with mock entreaty.

"Please, Miss Mary—please do not compel us to endure anything of what I have perpetrated. You can only hold me to account for what I may do in future. You cannot make your punishments retroactive if I show a repentant spirit now."

The girl shook her head at him.

"I wasn't going to hold you to account—only going

to substantiate myself. As I have told you before, I like your book very much. Margaret and I used to talk of it when we were in New York during the winter, and you were down in California writing it. We wondered how it was coming along and Margaret was greatly interested. She even wrote to me from Palm Beach asking if I knew anything more of it."

Walton smiled.

"Miss Hanlon was most gracious in what she wrote to me about it after it was published", he confessed.

"I think I'll have to write a book", remarked Tharny. Mary favored him with a smile.

"Do, Mr. Tharny, and win fame", she said.

"It wouldn't be for that reason", he declared, "but to try to win the approval of such charming critics as yourself and Miss Hanlon."

* * * * *

When Walton arrived at his newspaper building later that night he stopped for a few minutes in the busy news-room to inquire as to various happenings of the day and to glance over some of the Associated Press duplicates in the telegraph editor's office. As he was about to pass on to the city editor's coop, the office boy, who had just entered, informed him that a visitor, who claimed close acquaintanceship, was awaiting him. Then, as he stepped into his own snug office, Walton saw a well built man seated near the desk. The visitor stood up as Walton placed his hat on its hanger near the door and then strode towards the man who awaited him.

The visitor smiled and held out his hand.

"Not Dan—not Dan Bradshaw?" Walton demanded, accepting the proffered hand and looking keenly at the other. "Why, of course it is! Why Dan—you sight for weary eyes and aching heart!"

"Are you really glad to see me, John?"

"I ought to order you out for that question—you pirate you!" declared the newspaperman again tightening the clasp of his hand, and the look he gave his friend was enough answer to the question.

Walton pushed Bradshaw back into his chair and, seating himself at his desk, regarded the other intently.

"You surely are looking fit, Dan, and it takes a close friend's sharp eye, in fact, some one who knew you most intimately to penetrate your disguise."

Then he would not let Bradshaw say more than a few words to him for, as he explained, they were subject to interruption where they were. He would take his visitor to lunch and then to his apartment for a real, heart to heart talk.

But before they arrived at Walton's rooms, the newspaperman had first told Bradshaw of how he had received a letter from Dan, telling of the latter's intention to go up into the mountains, how Walton had concurred in Dan's desiring to be known as D. Williams until such time as he had rehabilitated his condition, how he had sent for Paddy Skiff and given him the information Dan had sent to the faithful Paddy, via Dan's letter to Walton, how the newspaperman had been on the verge of going to seek Dan, having had an inkling as to where Dan might be after getting the letter from him. "But my faith in you restrained me", Walton said. "I did not want to intrude on you at a time when you were working out your own salvation. I took your word as you gave it to me in your letter that you would return some day, and when that day came it would be one of joyful reunion for us both. And so it is. I am going to tell you again that you look great, Dan. You look like a man

who really has found himself and, by Jove, I'm happier than I've been in years."

Then Walton had given Dan other information—how, on returning from California, naturally worried at not having received answers to his last two letters to Dan, he had located Paddy Skiff, and Paddy had told him that Bradshaw had left Butte, hinting that the breaking up of the League might have made him consider things too unpleasant in Butte for him and thus have caused him to get away for a time; how Paddy, presently, had admitted that he did not know exactly when Dan had gone or where, but that he felt Dan was safe and sound and would turn up again, saying, "Sure, an' the boy could well have takin' me into his confidence as to his goin', but thin he must have had a rayson fer so doin' an' I'll not kick but jus' wait fer his commin' back."—How even then the newspaperman and Paddy had admitted to each other their uneasiness about Dan, and had considered the advisability of getting police aid in an effort to locate him, but then had come to the conclusion that if he had gone into retirement somewhere for a time, such action on their part might embarrass and perhaps injure him. How they even considered the chance of Dan having met with foul-play which made them the more anxious to get trace of him, though they tried to convince themselves that if such were the case, he was beyond their help and that the true facts would come out sooner or later. How, nevertheless, the newspaperman, still troubled, slipped over to police headquarters to ask his friend, McConnor the chief of detectives, to do a little secret scouting and how, on leaving the detective's office, the newspaperman had met Paddy who also had been bent on seeing McConnor. McConnor had definitely rounded up the information that two men had seen Dan

climb aboard a box car sidetracked at the water tank near the head of Working Lane and that a few minutes later the car had been switched away from there. So then, Walton and Paddy had rested more at ease as to Dan's safety. From time to time Paddy would come to Walton to see if word had been received from Bradshaw.

"When I got your letter and let him know", Walton went on, "we were about as happy as any two persons in Butte. But here's some real news", and Walton paused a moment while Bradshaw looked at him expectantly. "Because of your not being able to be present, Paddy and his bride-elect dispensed with the church ceremony they otherwise would have had, and he and the charming Mrs. Inez Harrity and myself went to the priest's house one evening where Mrs. I. H. became Mrs. Paddy Skiff."

Whereupon Bradshaw slapped the table in surprise. "Well, well,"—he exclaimed,—“and so the determined Paddy Skiff is married at last! Good enough! Of course I'll see him before I leave."

Walton gave Dan one more bit of news before they reached the newspaperman's apartments, and it also concerned Paddy.

"He enjoys his connubial bliss as a real householder and does not work in a mine now, but keeps the books and does some of the bossing at the Hotel Skiff, formerly the well-known boarding house of Mrs. Inez Harrity."

When they entered Walton's cheerful library, the miner surveyed the familiar room from the threshold.

"Great!" he exclaimed. "The same old place. Looks just as good to me as ever. No, a thousand times better than ever before."

"These rooms are about as homelike as rooms can be",

agreed Walton. "And come to think of it, young man, I believe I've kept these rooms as much because of you as for any reason of my own."

"My thanks for that", declared Bradshaw, "and my thanks also for still considering me a young man despite my very mature beard. You see", he went on jocundly, "I am indeed a real man."

There was, in truth, a thorough manliness about the miner that was a fulfillment of an earlier promise. There was greater reserve and sureness; stronger poise, calmer strength. Not only had Bradshaw come to his prime physically, the newspaperman noted, but he gave evidence of a broadened mental scope, a sounder judgment and, certainly, a self-reliance that was most gratifying. To Walton he was the same friend, essentially the same man as before, only more ripened. But to one who had not studied him so closely, known him so well and judged him so rightly in other days, he might now have been an entire stranger in mannerisms as well as looks.

Bradshaw quickly demanded Walton's book and, when his friend handed him a copy, the miner grew enthusiastic about its publisher, its makeup and promise of interest.

"You can't read it now", declared the writer taking the book from Dan and tossing it on the library table. "That is your copy to take with you and read at your leisure, but tonight you belong to me personally and though we've waited until we got up here for your story, I am becoming mighty impatient for it."

Comfortably ensconced in big, easy chairs, the softened glow of the library lamp the room's only illumination, their pipes lighted and thick smoke wreaths curling above their heads, they were ready.

"I was in California at the time you left, you know", remarked Walton. "Now tell me why, when and how you departed from Butte."

The miner looked calmly at the newspaperman and his face was inscrutable.

"Shanghaied!" he said briefly.

Then he told his story.

After the little pause that followed the recital, Walton said:

"Have you still the same ideas of social economy, Dan?"

"Don't tell me, after I get through, that more or less personal success is a big factor in changing a man's humanitarian views", answered Bradshaw with a laugh. "That is not a fixed rule—I can cite you dozens of instances to the contrary. If my ideas have undergone a change, it is not the result of whatever success I may be achieving, but because I have had a chance to get some real introspection and retrospection at a safe distance. I still think that evolution will continue to bring beneficial changes just as it always has. But it must be a logical evolution that finds man entirely ready, by reason of other progress, for each new feature of it as it comes. Those who are continually hoping for the evolving of new ideas and methods, also must get themselves more in tune, and experience a lot of personal evolution to a safer and saner view of many of the things they advocate. When the purpose of evolution is suddenly carried into effect with the speed which many of the evolutionists, we might call them, desire, it is apt to be a dangerous radicalism, and the shock of it on unprepared and chiefly on unreasoning and unreasonable minds is too much—it is apt to mean disorganization rather than equitable progress. If all the people of an autocratic

monarchy, for instance, or the vast majority of them are ready to cast off their yoke of oppressive government and institute a far more liberal one, then the venture may be a success, though many unrestrained acts sometimes attend such movements until the sentiment of the people crystallizes. When just a small coterie brings about such overthrow, a virulent chaos and unreasoning orgy of law defiance may result, because that is a sudden radicalism for which the people are unprepared and the shock of it is too much for them."

"But your leadership—your people—what of them?" asked the newspaperman.

Bradshaw shrugged his shoulders.

"I was sincere", he said. "Please don't think me egotistical in what I am going to say, but imagine we are speaking of some third person. That kind of leadership possibly might have helped them, because even if it did have, perhaps, too much of the personal equation in it, it was the kind that would not have left them in the lurch or brought them up against antagonisms which they could not hope to overcome. And it meant to have an educational value in it. It would have tried to show each and every one of them the reason for ambition and progress. I thought they were seeing it that way—but they weren't."

"And so it failed."

"Yes. They wanted at one fell swoop what they were not content to get by due process of learning and endeavor—to obtain in a way that would be for the real betterment of all concerned. Direct Action sophistry appealed to them because they thought it would bring immediately what they wanted and so, of course, they did not see that Direct Actionism, all that it urges and means, would be the destruction of their chance for

proper industry. They could not see that progress is dependent on being constructive and not destructive. They wanted actually to put into practice only the proposition of might being right, the very fault which they were so ready to ascribe to others and bitterly berate."

Bradshaw paused to light his pipe.

"Why, John, that last meeting of the League was an eye-opener, I can tell you. The conventions and the notions of evolution and all the smug preachings of doctrinaires were stripped clear away. It was a return to the primitive—the primogenial tribe battling for a carcass."

"And now what do you propose to do since you are becoming more and more the employer?" asked Walton smilingly.

"Put my ideas of equitable leadership into equitable employing", replied the miner. "I'm not going to turn my property over to any semi-political, semi-theoristic organization such as the socialistic fraternity to run. Why, even if any advocate of the socialistic doctrine should prove thoroughly capable of conducting a socialistic industrial enterprise, as I so often have heard ultra-socialist advocates outline it, he would have to be thoroughly managerial even to the extent of exercising strict discipline and the like, in order to make it a success for the benefit of the rest—and so turmoil would be created in the ranks and the usual jealousies and all that. And he would be cast headlong from the organization, whereupon the industry could go its uninterrupted way to smash. I think, John, that the great trouble with most of those ultra-socialistic 'soap-boxers' is that they have not thought of applying their own theory and process of evolution to themselves before tackling anything else. As for the anarchists—well, why speak of a

proposition that is merely a wish for a wildness prompted by a desire to carry into effect every notion, no matter how erratic, that pops into a disgruntled and trouble-seeking man's or woman's head?"

Bradshaw laid aside his pipe.

"John, I've got a fight on my hands", he said, suddenly switching the conversation.

"A fight?" demanded Walton in surprise.

"It involves a claim to apex rights—probability of mining litigation", Dan responded. "Tell you all about it before I leave Butte."

"Tell me now."

"It's not serious—yet. I'll tell you before I leave. If I get it cleared up, some day I'll make a good proposition to you. Now don't shake your head—I know you don't need it, but you would make one to me if you thought I needed it."

"We won't go into those 'proposition' details right now, Dan, my reformed anarchist", decreed Walton with a smile. "We're too busy being glad to see each other."

Bradshaw glanced at his watch and sprang from his chair.

"Yes and I'm keeping you up till daylight", he declared.

"You're not keeping me up—I'm the human night owl", protested Walton with a laugh.

But Bradshaw shook his head.

"Another day coming", he said. "Also, in this coming day, John, I intend calling on one Paddy Skiff. I want him to locate a miner named Jackson and I want both Paddy and Jackson and perhaps a few other men to come out to the mine. I've also got to get some mining supplies."

Walton stood up and Bradshaw placed a hand on the

newspaperman's shoulder.

"One thing more, John. I told you in my letter that I was D. Williams for the time being. I still am, but perhaps not for so much longer now. It is not so much of an assumed name, for Daniel Williams Bradshaw is my complete title, and soon I hope to be able to tell you some more facts you haven't even guessed at as to the why and wherefore of my wanting to let the Bradshaw part rest right now. Paddy Skiff won't say anything about it. The only two others who know of it are respecting my wishes regarding it. One is the clerk and recorder with whom I filed my location notice in my entire name and who is going to be my chief clerk when his term of office expires, and the other is the hard-headed, close-mouthed banker with whom I did business and of whom I have told you. As for Jackson and the other men who might go to the mine from here with Paddy—they will only know that they are working for Paddy Skiff and, if they care to make inquiry about it, that some fellow named Williams owns the mine."

"Your word is law with me, Dan", said Walton smiling, as he laid his hand affectionately on the other's arm.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE REAL THARNY

Norton's private office was invaded by a very welcome visitor the following morning.

"Well well, what special business brings you down town so early?" demanded Norton of his sister with smiling interest as he placed a chair for her.

"Serious business, DeWitt", she replied, as she seated herself and he resumed his place at his desk. "My Malvey family is sick—Dr. Gilmore told me about it as he was passing the house this morning."

"And so, of course", her brother put in, "you have come rushing down to go right up there to Working Lane's innermost recesses to give personal attention to the ailing ones."

"Oh yes, I'm going up there", she returned with quiet determination. "I rather thought when I was there a few days ago that Mrs. Malvey looked on the verge of illness, though she denied it. And now she really is sick."

"What's the matter with her?" he asked.

"Typhoid."

"You're not going up there. I am heart and soul with your efforts to do all you can for deserving ones you've found in Working Lane who need help, but when it comes to nursing typhoid patients—"

But she interrupted him with a little laugh.

"Not to do any nursing, old silly. Dr. Gilmore is just as interested as I am, bless his dear old heart, and he has a woman staying with Mrs. Malvey and looking after the children, two of whom, by the way, have chicken-pox."

Norton groaned and threw up his hands with a gesture of despair.

"Typhoid—chicken-pox! And you want to dash madly up there to supervise the Malvey home. Can't you send them everything they need without having to jeopardize yourself?"

"It isn't just the giving of things", she replied. "The personal concern—the showing that one really cares, is what actually does the most good. And I do care. Anyhow, I've had chicken-pox. Dr. Gilmore says there is no danger if the proper precautions are taken, and he's told me how to take them. I simply must go up there, De-Witt, and take some things along for the children. And, incidentally, it's my day for dropping in on old Mrs. Grady. But what I came to see you about mostly", she went on briskly, "was to ask the loan of Gus from you to drive the car up for me."

"Where is your own chauffeur?" he asked.

"I gave him the day off—there's a picnic he wanted to attend. So far as going up the Lane is concerned, I wouldn't have the least fear, but the road through the Lane is not easy."

"There is no denying you, Sis", he said fondly. "Gus shall take you up", and Norton reached for his desk telephone to make rapid arrangements to that effect.

"Gus and the car will be outside in two minutes", he informed her as he hung up the receiver. Then as she rose, he went over to her, and, holding her with a hand on either shoulder, he looked into her eyes.

"Look here, little sis, I can't have you taking needless risks. I glory in that good heart of yours that makes you do these things, but", with a little laugh, "I guess I am a bit selfish where you are concerned", and he kissed her.

When Mary emerged from the Monticana building, Gus and Norton's machine were at the curb, and the chauffeur jumped out quickly to open the door for her.

It was at that moment that Tharny, coming along, saw her and at once approached her, his hat in hand. He was his usual well-groomed self and, as always when in her presence, politely affable.

She gave him a friendly smile and paused to welcome him. And to his half-bantering remark that she was out rather early for a pleasure ride, she replied with the disclosure of her true mission.

"You are venturing up into Working Lane unescorted?" he asked in surprise.

"You forget Gus", she answered. "Besides", and she spoke a bit spiritedly, "it would be ridiculous to think of fearing to go up there. Working Lane is thoroughly honest—and true to itself, which is more perhaps than might be said of some other and more favored parts of the city. Of course there is plenty of roughness there, but no one in the Lane would say anything unpleasant to me without some one there quickly resenting it."

She smiled as she pictured in mind a scene of that sort and a quick championing of her cause, but Tharny misinterpreted her smile, thinking it was meant for him.

Also he apparently thought he saw a further opportunity to ingratiate himself with Mary Norton, who, indeed, had come to be so very much in his thoughts and his schemings, too.

"Let me go with you", he pleaded. "Tell me all about

your good deeds up there in Working Lane. Maybe I can be of help, too."

Laughingly, she permitted him to accompany her. It was far from displeasing to her that he should want to go. While it was true that she never had manifested special interest in him, yet she did not deny that he had some attraction for her. At times, she wondered just how strong her liking for him was.

Before she directed Gus to go to the Lane, she stopped at a grocery store to make several purchases for the Malvey family and old Mrs. Grady.

Tharny, who accompanied her into the store, begged to be allowed to add some more groceries to her purchases, but she compromised with him by saying he could go with her to a toy store a little farther down the street, where she intended to buy a few toys for the Malvey children, and add an extra doll for the smallest Malvey girl.

He made a jolly lark of doing that, and was right in thinking that his action advanced him considerably in her estimation.

The little plain-board house, in which the Widow Malvey and her children lived, stood at the head of Working Lane, almost directly opposite Carty's place. Coming one day to the Lane to inquire into the welfare of a former laundress of the Norton family, who had married and taken up her residence there, Mary Norton had learned, through the gossip of the former laundress, of the condition of certain families in and near Working Lane that immediately made powerful appeal to her sympathetic nature. She had come away from that visit thinking serious, analytical thoughts with much of thorough introspection in them. She accused herself of having been narrow, self-centered and selfish, though, as a

matter of fact, she had been nothing of the kind. And her visits to Working Lane families to whom she brought the sunshine of optimism as well as food, clothing and opportunities for work, were to her not mere duty, but whole-hearted desire.

"You needn't come in", she told Tharny as he helped her from the auto in front of the Malvey place. "Just give me those bundles and wait for me outside, please.

Tharny knew she was sincere, and so he realized he was safe in persisting in wanting to accompany her into the house. But she smilingly commanded him not to come and so, with what he hoped she would take for regretful resignation, he lighted a cigarette and prepared to wait for her. Shortly after she had entered, he sauntered about as if casually inspecting the surroundings. He eyed Carty's place meditatively, and as if with no fixed purpose in mind, tossed his half burnt cigarette away and strolled over to the saloon.

Inside the house, Mary encountered Paddy Skiff who was just leaving.

"Ah Mis' Nortin, 'tis ye then?" he asked with a glad smile. "I was just after bringin' a few things the Missus sent. 'Tis ye will bring Missus Malvey an' the kids the real joy—more blessings to ye."

"And it's mighty good of you and Mrs. Skiff to have been so thoughtful", she responded to the highly pleased Paddy.

"'Tis helpin' others is, after all, helpin' ourselves the most, Miss Nortin", he returned still smiling. Then he bowed slightly and left. Outside he slapped his cap on his wavy gray locks and breathed deeply. "Dom fine gurl!" he said aloud shaking his head emphatically, and went down the gulch to Hotel Skiff.

When Tharny entered Carty's, he made as if to in-

spect the cigars in the case at the front end of the bar, but he sent quick, sharp glances around the place.

At the other end of the bar, Vignon was expatiating, in bellowing tone, some of his pet theories. With hat off, coarse hair all awry and turned-back shirt collar revealing his bullishly muscular neck, he was brute force incarnate.

Carty came forward to inquire what Tharny wanted, but not before the latter had caught some of Vignon's utterances.

Tharny bought several cigars and then asked Carty who the speaker at the other end of the bar might be.

Carty told him.

"Vignon", said Tharny slowly to himself. "Has a peculiar sound." Then to Carty: "Take a cigar yourself." After that, he asked Carty several pointed questions involving Vignon, and received the information he desired for Carty always was eager to please generous-minded customers. Then Tharny conversed casually for a few moments of other subjects.

"This Vignon certainly seems a very unusual person", remarked Tharny reverting to their first subject. "I'd like to meet him. Would you mind telling him so?"

Vignon did not come at once after getting the message. Seemingly to ignore the request at first, was his way of showing he was not in the least subservient. Then in a moment or two more he slowly, swaggeringly made his way to Tharny.

The latter held out his hand, and after slight hesitation, Vignon accepted it for a brief instant.

"I understand your name is Vignon", Tharny began. "Mine's Tharny. I've heard of you", but he did not tell Vignon how recently.

"Yeh?" grunted the other.

"You working now?"

Vignon regarded Tharny with something of belligerent suspicion.

"What's the idea?" he asked.

"Oh, I thought if you weren't, you might be interested in a proposition I could make to you", replied Tharny.

"What is it?" demanded Vignon, suspiciously, but not at all belligerently.

"Have a cigar first", invited Tharny tendering one which Vignon took. "Let's step outside where we won't be of such interest to everybody in this place", Tharny went on, looking around at the other patrons who were more or less inclined to stare at him and Vignon.

Tharny and Vignon had been talking outside Carty's for several minutes, when Tharny saw the door of the house across the way open and knew that Mary Norton had finished her visit there.

"My office is in the Monticana building—third floor. Come there at nine o'clock tonight", Tharny said quickly to Vignon. "Just knock at the door—I'll be there."

When Tharny came up to Mary Norton across the roadway, he made what he wanted her to take as anxious inquiry about the Malvey family.

And after she had told him, she remarked:

"I didn't know you were acquainted in the Lane, Mr. Tharny, but I see you are."

"Oh, that fellow I was talking to?" returned Tharny with a laugh. "His name is Vignon, and he's quite a character."

"What a peculiar name", she said slowly. Then very candidly, "I thought him particularly villainous looking."

Tharny smiled. "He's not bad—I assure you. He's really very useful—that is to say, he has it in him to be

useful. And now where else do we go, Miss Angel of Mercy?"

"To Mrs. Grady's and one or two other places to which you may come along if you have an hour or so to spare."

"Most gladly", he assented.

CHAPTER XIX

PADDY SKIFF

That morning, Bradshaw's course lay in the direction of Working Lane, and he went there by way of Klemner's shop. He did not mean to stop there, but to view it in passing, but he found, when he came to the place, that it no longer was ornamented with a wooden boot. A broadly smiling young man was conducting a fruit stand in Klemner's former shop, and he could not give any information as to the shoemaker's new location.

Bradshaw noted that Working Lane presented little change from what he had known it to be—perhaps it appeared a bit more cramped after his life in the mountains.

He encountered Paddy Skiff at the door of the boarding house he had known as Mrs. Inez Harrity's place, Paddy having just returned down the Lane from Mrs. Malvey's.

He looked keenly at Bradshaw, but did not recognize him. Indeed, Dan had drawn his hat brim down more over his eyes than customary.

Bradshaw stopped and Paddy paused.

"I would like to see Mr. Patrick Skiff", said Bradshaw formally.

"Then keep yer eyes on me", replied Paddy.

"Oh, then I take it that you are Mr. Skiff", ventured Dan.

"Ye take it right", returned the other.

"I believe you are acquainted with one, Daniel Bradshaw", said Dan.

Paddy glanced hastily about, then beckoned with his head. "Come on with me", he invited, and led the way into the "office", a fairly good-sized room with a battered, newspaper-strewn desk in one corner, a few wooden kitchen chairs and a door giving access to the long dining room, for the "office" was more of a lounging place for the lodgers than anything like a sanctum for the proprietors. On this occasion, Paddy and his visitor had the "office" to themselves, and Paddy, after locking both its doors, indicated a chair for Bradshaw and then took a chair in front of the miner and close enough to permit of a low-voiced conversation.

Leaning forward, Paddy demanded brusquely, "An' what is there ye kin be after tellin' me of Dan Bradshaw?" He did not wait for an answer. "Or is it somethin' ye have come to find out 'bout him? If it's to tell of him, then welcome. But if it's to pry into his affairs, then to hell with ye!"

"I only want to ask a question", said Bradshaw quietly, with difficulty restraining his desire to laugh. "It is important I should know when and how he left here."

"An' it's importan' fer me to be answerin' no questions concernin' him without I know who asks 'em an' why", declared Paddy Skiff with spirit. "An' before ye go one bit further, let me tell ye, sir, I was an' am his frien', an' anything ye've a mind to say 'bout him may be used agin ye."

Bradshaw laughed and Paddy leaped from his chair. "'Tis no laffin' matter", almost shouted the aroused Paddy. Then more quietly; "If yer laff, however, is in

agreement with me, then all right. If it's meanin' to be at him—at Dan Bradshaw, then dom it, say so, man, an' let's be to it, fer ye'll have to lick me right down to the groun' before ye leave this very place—an' I'm after thinkin' there's still one good fight left in me yet."

Bradshaw took off his hat and tossed it on the desk. "Paddy, you dear old dynamiter, don't you really know me?"

Then it was that Paddy caught the familiar ring in the miner's tone and he stood for an instant as if hypnotized, peering at Bradshaw's face.

Dan stood up and placed a hand on either shoulder of his friend.

A look of gladness swept over the face of Paddy Skiff, and as he held Bradshaw off at arm's length to regard him intently, he exclaimed joyously, "By the bells of Shannon!—'tis me brave lad, Dan Bradshaw hisself!"

And with that the old man threw his arms around the returned one and hugged him right heartily. "I can't help it Dan, I got to do it", he declared. Then he pushed Dan back into his chair and resumed his own. "An' ain't it jus' like ye to be comin' an' devilin' the ol' man with jus' such nonsense as—do I know Dan Bradshaw an' where is he, an' such stuff. Tell me all, Lad. An' then maybe as how you'd be wantin' to see the Missus." He smiled more broadly. "There's now a Missus Paddy Skiff as was Mrs.—"

Bradshaw interrupted, shaking a finger at him. "I know all about it, you gay Lothario—Walton told me." He reached out and taking Paddy Skiff's hand, shook it vigorously. My congratulations to you—a million of them. But I am not so sure I can congratulate her. Still, you may have improved considerably. Anyhow, I

knew you were a goner—going to picture shows and the like.”

And so, for a brief interval, they indulged in happy, good-natured banter.

“I got the letter ye wrote to me months ago”, Paddy informed Dan, “an’ I attended to all ye asked. What clothes ye had left are safe, an’ yer drawin’s I put away against the time ye would want them. What money ye left I paid yer bills with—the Missus refusin’ to accept pay fer the few days room an’ board ye owed. I would be askin’ ye to come to Carty’s fer a social glass, but I think I know yer wishes in the matter.”

“I think you do”, agreed Dan. “No Carty’s and no social glasses, Paddy Skiff. Also, for the time being and for your own information, Dan Bradshaw is still under cover, and D. Williams is on deck—and my keen appreciation for Mrs. Skiff’s generosity and your kindness.”

“Fergit yer appreciation—an’ if it’s D. Williams ye want to be callin’ yerself, then D. Williams or D-anything-else it is, with no soul learnin’ it from me”, declared Paddy emphatically. “But nothin’ on earth kin make me think of ye as any but Dan Bradshaw an’ keepin’ ye that way in me heart. Talk to me as much as ye please, Lad, fer the Missus is in the kitchen an’ there’ll be no one comin’ here till the supper hour. Kin ye stay fer it? I kin tell the Missus that we’ve special comp’ny an’ ye’ll get a better feed nor any we got here in the ol’ days”, and he poked a playful finger at Dan.

But Bradshaw expressed his regret at not being able to do so. Then he detailed his idea of having Paddy and his wife dispose of their boarding house, Paddy to go to the mine as foreman, taking Jackson and several other trustworthy men with him for shift bosses and the like;

Mrs. Paddy Skiff to have the valuable boarding-house concession at the mine.

"It listens fine", said Paddy enthusiastically, "not because of the great chance ye so nobly offer me, Lad, an' the Missus, but because I kin be where ye are. I'm not surprised at yer makin' good an' becomin' a big minin' man—I'd bin surprised if ye hadn't. We've a chance to sell this place an' when I tell the Missus of what Misther D. Williams if after offerin' us she'll jump at the chance fer the mountain air out there would suit her fine."

"I'll write you a formal letter about it", said Bradshaw, "so that the Missus will see it is bona fide."

"What she'll see is that it's dom fine", declared Paddy. "I need no writin' from ye. I'm boss in me own house, Lad. I made up me mind to that when we got married, only—", he hesitated, "—only, of course, I don't want to be rough 'bout it an' so I ain't said much 'bout it to her yet. Ye mus' have a way with wimmin", Paddy continued judicially, "to make 'em see things as they should."

"I suppose you know all about that", said Bradshaw gravely.

"That I do—an' what's better still, I'm learnin' more of matrimonial deeplomacy all the time. When ye have solved the way of makin' a woman think ye are follerin' her when really ye are leadin' her, ye have solved a dom lot of problim."

"And have you solved it?" asked Bradshaw unsmilingly.

"Well", replied Paddy slowly and reflectively, "I'm studyin' the subject hard all the time."

Their talk drifted to other days. They spoke of the League, its breaking up and what was likely to follow. And Bradshaw thanked Paddy for his efforts in trying to trace him.

"When ye didn' show up at Carty's that night after the big fight that broke up the League", said Paddy, "me an' Jackson got sore at ourselves fer havin' left ye to come up there by yerself. We feared maybe ye run afoul of Vignon an' his gang, but as we was gettin' uneasy 'bout it, in come Vignon an' two of his crew, Wilkins an' Snitch, an' they was smilin' free an' easy—an' frien'ly too, so we felt sure ye had not met 'em."

Then Paddy related his subsequent efforts to locate Bradshaw.

"How did the others—the rest of the boys, regard my sudden leaving?" asked Bradshaw with a slight smile.

Paddy scratched his head. "Ye know how them things is, an' specially in a big place. Well—ye know how it is in most organization affairs—'The king is dead, long live the king!' Some thought ye might be in one of the outlayin' mines an' some thought ye might have gone to Arizona or over to the Coor de Lanes. Ye know how many of the boys go wanderin' 'roun' that way."

"And what of Cronel?" asked Bradshaw.

The smile left Paddy's face and he crossed himself as he spoke. "May his soul rest in peace—ye'll not find him on this earth."

"You don't mean—" began Bradshaw.

"He's gone", Paddy interrupted him. "It was this—what do ye call it?—gallapin' consumption, the doctor called it, got him. That the man grieved hisself to death is me firm opinion. That attack on him at the last meetin' of the League was a dirty piece of bus'ness an' he never got over broodin' 'bout it. There was much in his ideas an' much in his talk we could not agree with, but the man was good at heart an' he done no harm to no one except as he might have put some foolish notions in the heads of them what believed him—yet, after all, just

how many of them could understand' exac'ly what he was drivin' at anyhow?"

"He certainly was a good man in many ways", agreed Bradshaw slowly. "A dreamer and impracticable—willing to sacrifice himself to his own ideas and thinking he was doing it for the welfare of humanity. He was treated most shamefully at that last League meeting. I am sorry he is gone."

"A few of us gave him decent burial—he havin' no relatives", said Paddy, "an' we carried out his last request that what little money he might leave after funeral expenses, be given to the orphans' home."

Neither spoke for the space of a few moments.

"What's become of Vignon?" asked Bradshaw.

"Bad cess to the blatherskite!" exclaimed Paddy indignantly. "He tried hard enough to git the League together again, but most of the boys had all of it an' him they wanted. They got Direc' Action with a vengeance that night ye bowled 'em over like ninepins durin' the big fight of the League", and Paddy gestured expressively. "Fer a time Vignon laid low an' then begin shootin' off his mouth again at Carty's. He manages to hold onto jobs fer he is a darin' miner sure enough. Sometime ago he cut out of here an' I was told as how he'd bin up to his ol' stuff down in Arizona, but they put the rollers under him quick there an' 'twas said he headed fer the Coor de Lanes an' when it got unpleasant fer Direc' Actioners like him there, he come back here again. He's what ye might call a circulatin', agitatin', hell-raisin'—" Paddy paused and blinked at Bradshaw. "I jus' don't seem to be as fluent as I was in describin' that feller", he said. "But I do know he's a dom bad egg with a bad finish due him. He's here in Butte again an' fer the present keepin' his mouth shut. Maybe he thinks

the time's not ripe jus' yet fer an' outbust by him an' his crowd, an' so long as they're allowed to run 'roun' with their Direc' Action yappin' they're boun' to raise a fuss an' worse wherever they are."

"And what about Klemner?" asked Bradshaw.

"Moved further from the Lane", replied Paddy. "The Missus, who don't go out much but gits her information in matters of that sort by means of unfailable women wireless, says Klemner's girl has got the hanker-in' to get into the movin' picture game like as not to carry a spear or helpin' now an' again to form a backgroun' of merry villagers fer the 'King Of Hip-hoo-roo-ria' in 'The Curse of a Crown', or one of them kind of productions the Missus goes wild 'bout. The Missus says the girl is pesterin' her father to send her to Los Angeles so she kin begin what she calls her new career, but so far she ain't even got to the depot."

"There's one more—Crunch", said Bradshaw.

Paddy smiled. "He comes here more than he do to see Misther Walton—this bein' much closer to Carty's. The Missus keeps howlin' we mus' stop feedin' him, but then I notice she always fixes him up a good handout each time. An' 'tis a fact Carty's good to him too. He lets Crunch spend what money he's got at the bar an' when Crunch is broke, Carty slips him a piece of change. That beats tryin' to reform a feller an' lettin' him starve at the same time."

"You've put me right at home once more, Paddy", said Bradshaw with a laugh.

"Sure ye would recognize the situation quickly", remarked Paddy. "So far as the miners is concerned right now, organization talk differs. There's too many differen' ideas anyhow. Many of the men look at it this way—Why should they be after payin' a couple of dol-

lars or so into some new organization that comes along claimin' to be fer their benefit, an' then when that organization busts up fer one reason or enother or both, 'tis found the expenses has jus' about ate up the exchequer? Then there's some want to go back to the first union affiliation in stronger numbers. There's them as wants entirely new affiliation—an' so it goes. Maybe some day they'll all join up, but 'twill be a real high class, genuinely American organization they'll get in with an' not one that's run by a few hell-raisers—either that kind of an organization or nothin'. That's my best guess. The trades and other unions are goin' along 'bout the same as ever.

Bradshaw again discussed with Paddy the latter's place at the M. N. and the boarding-house proposition for the "Missus". Also there was a definite understanding that nothing was to be said of Dan's visit to Paddy.

"If you can find those other fellows who were fired that time with Jackson—the time I investigated"—and Bradshaw smiled as he spoke—"bring them along with Jackson. They're good miners and steady, and they're trustworthy."

They stood up and grasped hands firmly. "And now, Paddy Skiff, so long. I'll see you at the M. N.", said Bradshaw. "If you have my drawings handy, I'd like them. Give Crunch what clothes I left."

"Surest thing you know—I wasn't goin' to let ye go without them", returned Paddy. "Wait jus' a minute an' I'll get them."

He was back in a few moments with the papers he had so carefully put away for Dan.

"If there is anything you want to know about your coming to the mine", said Dan, "write to me—D. Williams, you know", and Bradshaw gave Paddy his ad-

dress. "I'll have that boarding-house contract waiting for you at the mine."

"I'll be there like a duck", declared Paddy. "But if ye or D. Williams has any contracts waitin' fer me at the mine or anywhere else", and there was a twinkle in Paddy's eyes, "I'll have to shoot ye—or him. I want no contracts from either of ye."

"I'll write you that formal offer anyhow", said Dan, picking up his hat, "—just for the sake of the Missus. I want her to feel sure that everything is strictly on the level. And that boarding-house is going to be remodeled into the best of its kind."

As they came to the outer door, an automobile was proceeding slowly down the Lane and Bradshaw regarded it indifferently until it came closer. Then as he noticed the girl in it, he started slightly and with a quick look, took in the man beside her.

"Who's that?" he demanded.

"Miss Nortin, of course", Paddy informed him. "She does a world of good in the Lane."

"No, no—I mean the man with her", Bradshaw said.

"A feller named Tharny—some kind of a minin' man I understan'. He come up once to look at the Benton when I was workin' there."

Bradshaw intently watched the machine and its occupants until a turn in the Lane hid it from view.

"Does this Tharny come up here, too—I should say, much?" he asked turning to Paddy.

"First time I seen him up here", replied the other.

"Well, good-bye, Paddy", and Dan held out his hand for a final handshake. "I'll be looking for both you and the Missus, and I know all that will be needed to make that boarding-house perfection will be the supervision of Mrs. Paddy Skiff."

Paddy laughed as he pressed Dan's hand.

"Ye sure are lookin' grand, let me tell ye that again", he declared. He stood off to admire Dan. "Also", and he smiled in his most winning way, "ye sure are not the hot-head I once knew—there's a big difference about ye --an' there's a fine reserve to ye now. An' if yer not Irish, Lad, 'tis not yer fault, but then some of yer ancestors at least mus' have come close enough to the Imerald Isle to have kissed the Blarney Stone!"

CHAPTER XX

THE SCHEMERS

At two minutes past nine o'clock that night, Vignon entered the Monticana building and took an elevator for the third floor.

At three minutes past nine o'clock, Bradshaw entered the same building and took another elevator also for the third floor.

As Dan came to the long hallway that led from the main corridor to various mining offices, one of which was Tharny's, he halted abruptly, for he beheld Vignon in the act of knocking at Tharny's door. And, as he stepped back into the main corridor again, he glimpsed the door opening disclosing Tharny, who shook hands with Vignon as he bade him enter.

"Oh ho, so that's the lay of the land", said Bradshaw to himself. "Good thing I was delayed a bit in finding out where this fellow Tharny hangs out. Morning will do."

Closing the door after Vignon had entered, Tharny motioned to a chair and then reoccupied the office-chair behind his flat-topped desk.

"Smoke?" he asked.

Vignon nodded.

Tharny pulled open a desk drawer and took out a box of good cigars, opened it and extended it to Vignon who helped himself to one.

"I don't know whether you know my business or not", remarked Tharny as he lighted a cigar, Vignon doing likewise and lolling back in his chair. "But I guess I told you something about my being a mining man. I'm representing a big syndicate right now. Ever hear of the big gold strike made in the Red Flower mountains?"

"Yeh—somethin' about it", replied Vignon.

"The crowd I represent is getting in there—that is to say, it proposes to do so", Tharny informed the other. "I'll come to the point, Mr. Vignon"—Vignon straightened up a bit at being thus addressed—"and give you the outline of the situation. The syndicate I represent has, through me, secured options on claims not far from the biggest gold proposition up there—a property run by a fellow named D. Williams. We—that is to say, I—I am going to try to prove that we have apex rights in the claims I hold by option—you know enough about mining to understand what I mean. If I have that apex right or rights so far as the veins in the property immediately adjoining the main Williams property is concerned, and which adjoining property he also controls, then I might go on and claim the same rights with regard to his main mine."

"I getcha", put in Vignon. "It's a case of ousting Mr. D. Williams when things is ripe—I seen something like that pulled before in my mining experience."

Vignon leaned back, pulling at his cigar—giving himself airs. This, indeed, was the life, this thing of mixing up in big mining matters with the representative of a prominent mining syndicate.

"Good—you're very astute Mr. Vignon", and Tharny leaned forward.

Vignon frowned a little. Tharny thought he was

impressed, but Vignon was merely a bit puzzled by the tribute.

"Mining litigation is always very problematical", Tharny went on, and then asked crisply, "What do you know, Vignon, of labor matters in that locality?"

Vignon studied a spot on the floor at his feet and then suddenly looked up with a smirk.

"I think I gotcha again", he said. "But tell me some more."

And Tharny did.

For more than an hour he spoke.

"There's nothing at all to do until the spring season opens," Tharny concluded, "which is only a matter of a very few months anyhow. Meantime, keep on handling things here for your big league idea and work around to the proposition of bringing the Williams miners into its jurisdiction along with other miners in the state. If the Williams bunch once is under the league jurisdiction—well, any tieup in this camp will tie them up, until—well, until things are adjusted here. That ought to give Williams a labor run for his money. I think that will be the finishing touch needed."

"Yeh—I shouldn't wonder", agreed Vignon affably.

"You keep in touch with me right along", Tharny instructed him, "and in the spring you might be able to swing the jurisdiction thing—if your league is going. Anyhow it's worth trying. Meantime, on the last of each month you call here and I'll hand you a hundred dollars."

"I getcha", said Vignon and, reaching over, he took another cigar which he stowed away in his coat pocket.

Later that night, Vignon sat at a corner table at Carty's with several persons congenial to him, including Wilkins and Snitch, and in his most impressive way, he outlined a plan for the reorganization of the League,

painting a rough, but striking picture of state-wide jurisdictional powers.

He felt a mighty sense of new importance and acted the part to such extent indeed that Carty was moved to inquire of Wilkins who had stepped up to the bar for a match, "What's that fellow Vignon been drinking today? He's all hopped up."

And that sense of importance was with Vignon the next morning so that he gave himself up to rather lurid fancies. As those ideas grew in his mind, he began to picture himself already a new power in the city's affairs and when the mental visioning had been stimulated by a few drinks of whiskey, he felt convinced that it was time for action. He sat down at a table at Carty's to revel in his thoughts. Ah, he had it—what a fool not to have thought of it before! It was a fine idea, but if he intended to be a great power, he would have to think of these things more quickly. Really, he was quite impatient with himself. If he could call a meeting and form a new nucleus of a League, that would be a fine start, but if he could call such a meeting and give it definite promise of a recognized status, then the League would grow by leaps and bounds in a marvelously short time—and he, Vignon, would be the recognized backbone of it. And what better promise to take to such a meeting than that some of the big mining companies readily would accord due recognition to a well-organized, powerful League that could and would maintain strict jurisdictional rights over most of the labor in the city and later in the state, whether the employing companies liked it or not? Why, beyond question, the leading companies would be glad to come in on the ground floor, as it were—to come in at the very start with iron-clad contracts.

Vignon leaned back and hooked his thumbs in the

armholes of his vest, his head a little to one side and his facial expression his closest attempt at looking judicial.

And would he make those contracts specify a very high minimum wage scale regardless of copper's price, and also a maximum working day of six hours? Well—maybe. Yet that might be quite a radical departure at this time—at the start. No, by hell, he would put those stipulations in the contracts and that would please his immediate followers, and if he could persuade the companies to believe that he could bring about an amelioration of the contracts, he also might be able to persuade them to see how very, very valuable he too was to them and so he could whipsaw the companies and the League and—by Jumping Crickets, it was a fine idea! And he smote the table with heavy, clinched fist.

"Trying to bust up the furniture?" called out Carty from back of the bar.

"This ain't furniture—it's junk", Vignon snarled back and hit the table again.

"Well, come have a drink anyhow", invited Carty good-naturedly.

Vignon accepted. In fact he imbibed two more.

"Got important business this afternoon", he said with an impressive nod at Carty. "Got to see DeWitt Norton."

"Like fun you have", replied the unimpressed Carty.

"Go chase yourself!" exclaimed Vignon contemptuously. "I'll make all you birds sit up and take notice."

Carty calmly went on wiping a beer glass. "DeWitt Norton wouldn't see you with a spy-glass", he remarked.

"I'll be close enough so's he can see me with his eyes half-shut", boasted Vignon. "An' if any of the other big comp'ny men are in our city, I may see some of them too."

"'Maybe' is a damn good word", remarked Carty.

"Also got business with my friend, Gerald Tharny", Vignon went on loftily. "I may get the time to drop in on him, too, this afternoon."

"By gravy, the man knows them all!" exclaimed Carty gazing at Vignon with pretended amazement.

* * * * *

Whatever the afternoon promised for Tharny in the way of visitors, there was no mistaking that he had one that morning.

Bradshaw called on him.

"I am D. Williams", Dan said crisply as he took the chair opposite Tharny. "I didn't know until yesterday that you were in Butte just now and expected to get in touch with you in Spokane."

"I'm very glad to see you", said Tharny suavely, but he did not offer to shake hands, nor did Dan make any move to do so.

"I'll make my talk as brief as I can and to the point", Dan announced, "for I'm leaving Butte at noon. This is my statement to you, Mr. Tharny—I know all about the syndicate you represent. I know you have been given a lot of authority by it to handle its Montana business, though as yet it hasn't come into this state to any great extent. In fact, you've somehow bluffed those Spokane people into the belief that they must leave all their Montana affairs strictly in your hands in order to make good in this state."

Bradshaw regarded Tharny with unflinching, steely look, and the other kept his eyes lowered as he toyed with a penholder.

"And now let me tell you something that I mean", Bradshaw continued. "You can play all the dirty game you want, but I'll not come across to you."

Tharny raised his head with a jerk.

"Dirty game?" he repeated. "What do you mean—what are you talking about?" He threw the penholder back on the desk. "And I don't understand your 'come across' allusion."

"Don't fool with me, Tharny", Bradshaw warned. "I know what I'm talking about. You planted that engineering crew up there next to one of my outlying claims after you had some development work done. I know the whole scheme, for I went over there and had a talk with the engineer in charge and I'll say for him that he is a decent man. You're bluffing about sinking any big money in that ground to prove any apex rights. I know that territory from A to Z, and your sending that lawyer to me to tell me that you have good reason to believe you could develop apex rights in that ground that would give you a fine footing for involved mining litigation, was all bosh."

"I didn't send him to tell you that", said Tharny.

"Oh no, you didn't. He came ostensibly to propose a resurvey of lines, but the information he managed to give me was what I just have told you. And the whole thing is bosh."

"Is it?" asked Tharny with a suave maliciousness.

"Yes, it is", Bradshaw declared positively. "But that's not the worst of it. The implication of that miserable shyster of yours that perhaps I could effect a settlement with you, nearly caused me to throw him down the mountain side. I would have if I hadn't remembered that he was only acting for you. I wish you, Mr. Tharny, had come up there with that kind of a proposition."

"I was too busy to see you personally, Mr. Williams —that Red Flower mountain business is merely a side issue with me."

"Side issue nothing. The Spokane syndicate found at the time I was getting my property going right that it needed some good mine to augment its Coeur d'Alene holdings and tried to buy my claim. I wouldn't sell. So I understand from mighty good authority that you undertook to handle the thing for the syndicate—and your scheme is to force me to sell or tie me up with litigation; wear me out. That game has been played before. Also I judge you are either trying to get yourself in more solidly with the syndicate, and don't care how you do it, or you are desperately in need of money." Dan rose to his feet. "Tharny, you're a damned crook!" he exclaimed not at all loudly, but very emphatically.

Tharny sprang to his feet, his face almost livid.

"Get out of here—get out!" he commanded.

"No, not get out", said Bradshaw quietly. "And you'll never put me out. I didn't expect to arrange any details here. I have another plan as to that. But when I found you were in Butte, I couldn't overlook the treat I had promised myself of telling you a few things. Just bear in mind that I won't be frightened, coerced nor wearied into selling, and I'll fight to the last ditch for my rights. Nor will I pay a skunk like you one cent of tribute to switch the syndicate's attention away from me. And never send that pitiful go-between to my place again or I'll send him back to you in a strawberry cup."

"Get out—I'll have you put out of here", and Tharny's nervous and livid face betokened his anger as he made as if to move towards the door leading to his general office.

"No need to exert yourself, Tharny", Bradshaw said with more than a tinge of sarcasm in his tone. "I have to go now anyway."

For many minutes after Bradshaw had left, Tharny

sat hunched in his chair, angry and white and muttering dire threats.

* * * * *

And with the coming of mid-afternoon came word, via private telephone, to DeWitt Norton from his outer office that one Mike Vignon wanted to see him personally.

"Ask him what his business is", instructed Norton and hung up the receiver.

"If it's business I'll go at once", said his sister who was ensconced in a comfortable leather chair near her brother's desk. "I only dropped in to say hello and remind you that we dine out with Mr. Tharny this evening."

"I don't think it's business, it—" and then the bell of his private telephone rang again.

It seemed the visitor had important business pertaining to labor matters to transact with Mr. Norton—Would Mr. Norton see him now or set a definite date later?

Mary was standing and she whispered quickly to her brother, "I'm going."

"Let him come in now", said Norton to the man at the other end of the line. Replacing the receiver, he spoke to his sister. "Mary, if you don't mind, please step into the other office and I'll quickly dispose of this visitor. I want to see you before you go."

She did as bidden, seating herself in a big arm chair beside the open door of the snug little inner office that Norton sometimes used. She could not be seen from the office now occupied by her brother, nor could she, from her place, see who might enter it, but she heard the door open and the visitor enter.

She heard her brother invite him to be seated, and

then in his concise business tone inquire what the other wanted. She heard a not quite distinct exchange of remarks and then her brother's voice.

"I don't care to discuss the matter at all with you, Mr. Vignon."

Vignon! She raised her head quickly. Where had she heard that name? Why did she so immediately associate it with something disagreeable? Where—why, of course—the man in front of the saloon opposite Mrs. Malvey's—the man to whom Tharny had been talking and whom she had thought so particularly vicious looking.

Again her brother's brisk, cool tone came to her.

"There are contracts in force right now even though there is no such organization as the one you speak of with jurisdictional powers. Your proposition as to making contracts with a League about to be formed, is impractical and utterly ridiculous. I'll always do business with any proper representation and if a bona fide union obtains jurisdictional control, I'll do my business with it. I think that is all."

She heard the shuffle of Vignon's feet as he arose and heard his muttering tone.

Then again her brother's voice.

"I suppose the next thing you'll be suggesting is that you could fix things all right between the employing concerns and the League, but I'm not looking for any fixers. That door opens into the hallway."

Some more shuffling of feet, the opening of a door, and again the heavy voice of the visitor.

Again she heard her brother's tone. "No—that is final."

The door closed and Norton called out, "Come in, Sis—the interview is ended."

He looked up laughingly at her as she came in and stood by his desk.

"I do catch some queer fish in the course of the day's work and that one just in here is one of the queerest in a long time."

"You've got to promise me one thing, DeWitt", she said seriously. "Won't you be more careful about letting every sort of person in here who wants to come in? Say you promise."

"Oh now, Sis—I am able to—"

"Say you promise."

"Well—I promise", and he laughed and caught her hand.

"And say you promise you won't let that man in here any more", she persisted.

"Now Sis—"

"Say you promise."

"Well—all right, I promise. He's not a charming visitor at that."

"I think he is terrible—I have a real fear of him!" she exclaimed with a vigor that made her brother laugh again.

CHAPTER XXI

THE UNKINDEST CUT

From the Monticana building, Vignon betook himself along the street for several blocks, then turned into an alleyway, that was a mere slit between two tall buildings. This path he traversed to its end where was a small, low door, the back entrance to a saloon—Italian Joe's place. Vignon felt in need of proper solace, but was not inclined to go to Carty's for it. He was smarting from Norton's words and still mindful of the surprise felt by him, at the time, in not being able to bring himself to resent the mine owner's sharp statements, as he knew he would have and often had those of other men who had thus offended him. Vignon was not a student of psychology, but he guessed at a very powerful psychological fact when he somehow realized it was the cool courage and positiveness of the other, and physically smaller man that had daunted him. Norton in no way had indicated the slightest fear of him and even as he had wondered why, Vignon had found himself unable to oppose the other's courage.

He threw a coin on the bar. "The red—Joe", he commanded.

Joe set a whiskey glass and imitation cut-glass decanter full of evil-looking red liquid on the bar, and Vignon helped himself to several burning drinks.

"Joe", he declared sneeringly and malevolently, "I'm

too damn good-natured—that's the trouble with me. I know my strength, an' it makes me good-natured. If I hadn't been good-natured I'd a threw a guy out of his own office a little while ago. I know my strength an' it makes me good-natured. You get me? I'm too damn good-natured."

He felt better. That is to say, his self-esteem had returned, for there also had come to him the inspiring recollection that Tharny, the well-known mining man, was back of him. Why, he'd go up and see Tharny right now—so help him, he would! That was the ticket—see Tharny, and then attend to one other bit of business he had been neglecting all too long.

Tharny did not give Vignon a joyous welcome, nor was he moved to enthusiasm by Vignon's somewhat rambling talk and his final suggestion, which became more emphatic all the time, that he would appreciate a bit of an advance payment on the first one hundred dollars he was to get.

"You ought not to have any money right now", said Tharny.

"What do ya mean—not now?" demanded Vignon flaring up.

Tharny reached into his pocket and drew out a ten dollar bill which he tossed over to Vignon and then made a note of it on his blotter.

"You're a trump card—Mr. Tharny—a real trump", declared Vignon folding the bill closely and pushing it down into his pocket. Then with what he meant for friendly jocularity, "Who do you want killed for this?"

Tharny looked up sharply.

"Say, Vignon, how is that League proposition coming along—have you started anything on it yet?" he asked.

Vignon leered at him and winked knowingly.

"Leave it to me, Bo. By spring your friend, D. Williams, will think the League's agoin' all right, all righto."

Tharny smashed his fist down on his desk, all his wrath rushing out pell-mell and he was then not at all the suave-spoken, carefully-groomed looking man.

"Damn Williams—damn, damn him—I'd like to wring his miserable neck. He's no good and I'll show him who he's up against. I'll get him!"

Then, as though realizing the spectacle he was affording the grinning Vignon, he ceased abruptly.

"I'm very busy right now, Vington", he said, straightening his tie and smoothing back his hair. "Come in again—I want to have some more good talks with you."

"Oh I'll be here—don't worry", promised Vignon as he prepared to leave. "I'll say one thing for you, Mr. Tharny—I think you're all right."

The visit to Tharny had been profitable, and it almost banished from Vignon's mind the memory of the unpleasantness of Norton's cutting words—and the surprise he had experienced in finding himself unable to resent Norton's statements.

He hailed a street car at the next corner and rode for several blocks. A walk of a few blocks brought him to a small shop over the entrance of which swung a wooden boot, while fastened above the door was a modest sign with the words—KLEMNER—SHOEMAKER.

Vignon entered with a swagger. Only the cobbler was there and, strange to say, he was not industriously pegging away. He sat at his accustomed place, peering through his glasses at a letter in his hand and so absorbed was he that he did not note the new arrival.

"Well—how's tricks, Klemner?" asked Vignon, after

he had stood for a moment looking down at the shoemaker.

Klemner slowly raised his head to regard him. He nodded and then resumed his study of the letter.

"Look here Klemner", said Vignon a trifle belligerently, "can that reading and get me. I'm here to make a proposition and I want a straight answer."

Klemner bestirred himself as if for the first time realizing Vignon's presence.

"Oh yes—it's Vignon. How do, Vignon—sit down."

Vignon drew a stool close to the shoemaker and seated himself. Then as he spoke, he tapped the shoemaker on the knee.

"Look here, Klemner, I've come into a good thing. I'm in solid with the big mining men now. I'm not throwin' down any of my own propositions, but I'm in right both ways just the same. I'm here to talk business now. You like me—you always acted right by me. I want to join your family."

"My family?" repeated the shoemaker slowly.

"That's it—me an' Millie. I want to be your son-in-law. Let her quit stallin' around with that bird Chris—he's a joke."

Klemner looked down at the letter again.

"Millie's gone", he said.

Vignon straightened up in surprise.

"Gone?"

"Yes—she and Chris. It wasn't at all necessary that way. It didn't have to be that way." It was as if the shoemaker was talking to himself. "They could have stayed right here."

"What's all this guff?" demanded Vignon standing up and leaning over the shoemaker.

The other did not look up.

"They—Chris and Millie", he said slowly, "they got married this morning and they've gone to Great Falls where's he got a good job—it says so in the letter—and they want me to forgive them and go over there to live with them."

"What!" ejaculated Vignon staring back. "She an' that fool went an' eloped on you—An' what you goin' to do 'bout it?"

Klemner was peering down at the letter.

"I'm an old man", he said slowly. "I guess I'll go over to them. They'll have a nice little place. I won't have to work no more—it says so in the letter—I can have a little garden—it says so. But it didn't have to be that way. They want me though—it says so—"

"Ah, tell it to Sweeny!" exclaimed Vignon and stamped out of the place, banging the door behind him. Just outside the door he paused and leaned back against the wall beside the cobwebby window.

"Now ain't this a hell of a world?" he demanded of the Great Outside.

CHAPTER XXII

CLEARING THE SLATE

A few weeks after his seance with Tharny, Bradshaw was in Spokane and he had with him his very clever attorney and his general manager.

With mock solemnity he shook hands with his two companions following their consultation at their hotel, remarking, "Gentlemen—be with me in thought and give me all the sustaining absent treatment you can think of—if not too busy."

"Oh we'll bank on your coming through the ordeal alive", remarked the attorney. "But really, Mr. Williams, if you desire me to go with you—"

Dan waved the suggestion aside.

"You may have all the opportunity you want for helping me beard the lion in his den later on—both of you."

Then he left them and his course took him to a big office building of which two entire floors were devoted to the business of a great mining syndicate, and where, presently, he was waiting in a reception room while a very matter-of-fact office boy was taking his card to an inner sanctum. For all the apparent light-heartedness with which Bradshaw had started on his mission from the hotel, his thoughts were serious and all his fighting instinct was at the surface.

In due time, the boy returned with the information

that Dan was to follow him.

The way led down a private corridor and in response to the boy's knock on a door, a hearty voice called out, "Come in."

Dan had seen some business offices that he had thought bordered on the luxurious, but never before had he entered one that for unostentatious elegance equalled this one. Its beautiful mahogany furniture was spotless. Its deep velvet rug of finest quality over a perfect hardwood floor, had not the minutest stain.

Through Bradshaw's mind flashed the thought that verily this was the finest lion's den on record. As for the lion—he was a robust, portly, smooth-shaved man with cheeks of baby pinkness, but with about as keen a pair of steel-gray eyes as ever warmed into thorough affection, or chilled an adversary to the very marrow.

He arose, as Dan entered, and gave him a little nod. He was smiling slightly and he still fingered Dan's card. But there was nothing at all effusive in his greeting or manner.

"Won't you be seated?" he invited courteously, and Dan took a chair which directly faced the other as he resumed his place in his ponderous swivel-chair behind his unusually wide, flat-topped desk.

Bradshaw wasted no time in formalities.

"You're a busy man, Mr. Satterton", he began at once, "and I appreciate your seeing me so quickly. I have important business, too, calling me back home as quickly as I can leave here. I've come to put some fair and square facts before you as president of the syndicate that has been trying to run me out of the Red Flower gold district—"and as the other held up a protesting hand, "Yes, that's the straight of it—you've been trying to do all of that—your syndicate has. And if it

hasn't, then it doubtless will be interested in getting these facts anyhow."

"We've been proceeding in a thoroughly businesslike way", the other man said in his velvety tone that somehow suggested plenty of iron determination. Indeed Bradshaw had very quickly sensed why this man was head of a great and powerful syndicate. And though Satterton was the concrete personification of the enemy, which Dan heretofore always had thought of as "The Syndicate", formless as to body, soulless and yet fearfully menacing to him, yet he did not feel any personal antagonism against this man. Somehow he then and there conceived the idea also that the other man likewise respected him.

"Well, businesslike as you might think it", Bradshaw returned steadily, "I have regarded it as nothing other than the effort of a powerful syndicate to take by any means—any means, Mr. Satterton—the property of an individual it deemed immeasurably weaker—meaning myself."

"And your purpose in coming?" the other man said, very palpably suggesting the laying of all cards on the table.

Bradshaw leaned slightly forward, resting his hand on the arm of his chair. "I refused your offer to buy me out", he said. "I did not consider it an equitable price. I don't mind saying that it would not have enabled me to liquidate my indebtedness at that time. I made up my mind, and am still of the same mind, to fight any and all efforts to force me to sell with the alternative of very tedious and very costly mining litigation. I'll fight to the last ditch, Mr. Satterton. If I go down in that fight—should you force it on me, I'll go down with flying colors—and I don't think I'll go. If you mean to

be as fair and square with me as you protest you are, as you wrote to me last week you really mean to be, then you'll heed my request. You'll send for Mr. Gerald Tharny; have him meet me before yourself and your board of directors, or any other officials of your syndicate you may designate. I want to confront him before you, submit my proofs to you, let you get the facts as they really are while we both are present—and I promise to show him up."

"Your request is most unusual—really extraordinary", declared the other. "I don't believe I ever heard of a similar instance."

"I agree it is unusual", returned Bradshaw. "But I take the view that your syndicate, whatever its motives and methods with regard to me, would not want to plunge into anything that would be bootless for it. If my proposition will result in the saving of much time, aggravation and expense for your syndicate, as well as to show the justness of my contention, you would consider it advisable to give my idea due consideration, would you not?"

Satterton swung around in his chair and seemingly forgot all about his visitor as he gazed through a window, meanwhile reflectively stroking his chin. All at once he swung back and turned the keenness of his gaze on Dan.

"It's without precedent so far as I am concerned. When we go into a fight, we go into it neither asking for quarter nor giving it. And you ask us to put one of our representatives on trial with you as the prosecuting attorney."

"I'm not asking for quarter, nor do I propose being a prosecuting attorney", Bradshaw declared. "I want you to get the facts, and the best way to get them is with

Tharny present—and his answering some questions I would like to ask him in your presence."

"I'll take the matter up with my directors", announced Satterton after a moment's pause. "Why do you want Tharny here?"

"He is your representative in Montana and you have left the handling of the matter which concerns me entirely in his hands for investigation, indeed for much action, and certainly you must have been actuated in all your later moves against me by reason of his reports and recommendations."

"Perhaps so", admitted the other.

"Well, Mr. Satterton, I'm not going to express myself here and now as to what I think of Tharny. I want him here to face me and my side of the case."

"What made you think I—we, would give any consideration to such a plan as you have suggested?" asked Satterton with just the trace of a smile and a slight lessening of the steely quality of his eyes.

"The belief that if you had the real spirit of fair play, you'd show it this way", answered Bradshaw candidly, and the other laughed frankly.

"Where are you staying?" he asked.

Bradshaw told him.

"I will give you our decision by—"he looked at his watch—"say, five-thirty this afternoon."

"If such a meeting is arranged", Bradshaw said as he rose, "I would want to bring my attorney and my general manager with me."

Satterton, who also stood up, waved his hand indifferently. "Oh, that would be for you to say, Mr. Williams", he remarked.

When Bradshaw returned to the hotel, he mapped out some work for his manager in the way of arranging

certain reports for quick use, and then he and his attorney took a long walk.

"I guess I aroused old Satterton's curiosity more than anything else", said Dan as they strolled along. "I count on the unexpectedness of the thing to carry my point as to the meeting."

As they walked back towards the hotel, Bradshaw grew silent, though not for a moment nervous. Once he remarked, "It's like waiting for a jury's verdict—and it really does mean a lot to me. I wouldn't like long drawn out litigation. It's expensive and when you come right down to bedrock basis, you never can anticipate a court result, though I feel sure we'd have them licked to a standstill if it's a fight they want."

Promptly at five-thirty, the telephone in Bradshaw's room rang and he was at the instrument in an instant. The conversation was brief, and then he hung up the receiver and turned to the deeply interested lawyer and manager.

"Well, gentlemen", he said with a smile, "Mr. Satterton's private secretary begs to inform us that Mr. Satterton has taken the matter up with his directors, the syndicate's vice president and doubtless a few other officials, and we can come to his office at eleven day after tomorrow morning prepared to enter into a discussion of the matter. Mr. Gerald Tharny will be there. What do you say to our going to a show tonight?"

* * * * *

A spacious directors' room with customary business-like, long oaken table bordered with swivel-chairs—President Satterton presiding in the officer's place. At his right, the syndicate's vice president—at his left, Tharny. Two directors occupied places at the right of the table—three directors, the syndicate's treasurer,

statistician and chief engineer at the left side. Two secretaries were at a little side desk.

It was an impressive setting and certainly it looked businesslike to Bradshaw, who had the place at the end of the table opposite Satterton, with his lawyer at his right and his manager at his left, and several leather document-cases on the table before him.

"Gentlemen, no need of going into detail in explaining the purpose of this conference", Satterton was saying. "We all are thoroughly conversant with its purpose now. Mr. Williams, are you ready to proceed?"

Dan rose.

"I am."

And proceed he did, speaking easily, earnestly, while the officials of the syndicate leaned back to regard him and listen closely; Tharny with a slight curl of the lip; the secretaries at the little side desk taking notes.

Quickly he sketched the offer that some months before had come to him from the syndicate via Tharny; his refusal of it; the appearance of an engineering crew on property adjoining claims next to Dan's main property and on which claims he held options—of word from Tharny as to the syndicate's claim to options on the property adjoining his option-controlled claims; of the allegation that the syndicate believed itself to have apex rights which would give them vein rights in those claims which Bradshaw had optioned; of the more than hint of litigation—and other details, technical, very involved to the layman, but perfectly clear in purport to all present.

"The thing is this, gentlemen", Bradshaw went on, "—I can't be bluffed that way. I am free to confess that I believe your entire information of the matter has come to you from your Montana representative, Mr. Tharny. I don't know what he has reported to you or to your

chief engineer, but I do believe that you have been given great cause to labor under a misapprehension."

Tharny half rose. "I—" he began.

"Just a moment—let Mr. Williams finish", interrupted Satterton.

"I am not going to mince words", continued Bradshaw. "If I had not thought you—the syndicate, under a misapprehension, I would not have ventured to come here. Now gentlemen, I am no child to be bully-ragged. I can go into court and give you the fight of your lives. The apex claims are all rot. Don't you suppose that when I secured options on the ground adjoining mine, I also could have got options on the ground you optioned later? I obtained the privilege to make a thorough examination of that ground. My engineers informed me that there was nothing worth while following there. Your engineer up there as much as admitted it to me—he is thoroughly honest as well as capable. His reports went to Mr. Tharny, and what Mr. Tharny reported to you, I, of course, have no way of knowing—definitely. I only can suspect."

"Will you permit a question?" interrupted Satterton.

"Certainly."

"What leads you to the use of the word 'suspect'?"

Bradshaw looked steadily at Satterton.

"A representative of Mr. Tharny—an attorney, I believe he poses as—called on me, and his tacit proposition was nothing short of blackmail!"

Every official of the syndicate, Satterton included, excepting Tharny, sat up straight. The two secretaries at the little side desk, looked up sharply.

"I knew his syndicate to be so busied with other big projects that it left the handling of the entire matter in Mr. Tharny's hands. When I determined to come here

for this—conference, I purposely wanted him present. I knew—I thought it would simplify matters. I could have settled this matter with Mr. Tharny through his attorney, for a financial consideration. I gave that shyster three minutes to get out of my office. Now, recurring to the litigation with which I am threatened—it does not frighten me in the least. I have here all the engineering reports, the certified copies of my own option rights as well as the offer of option rights on the very ground you claim—or rather Mr. Tharny claims to have secured options."

"You mean to say you have option rights on the land that I got options on?" demanded Tharny.

"I do", replied Bradshaw. "And from a different party."

"So that would bring that land into dispute as to ownership", commented Satterton.

"Exactly", Dan informed him. "There would be counter-litigation on that point too."

"Why, you couldn't get a clear abstract to your own main property", Tharny burst out. "There's no record of a transfer to you from the original locator—or to anyone else."

"I would promise to clear that point all right—if I sold, or for any other good reason", Bradshaw said with a smile.

Dan's lawyer leaned forward and whispered something to him.

"I want to say, that while I still hold the option from the man who doubtless owns that land on which you claim options from another source", Dan went on, "and while I believe the man from whom I secured my option could establish priority of location, that, nevertheless, would require much more litigation for you. Gentlemen,

if you will pull out of this thing entirely, I will, to save all further dispute, take over your options on that land at a ten percent increase on what you paid for them."

Tharny jumped up.

"This is preposterous, and allegations have been made here that—"

Bradshaw was still standing and he leveled a finger at Tharny.

"I'm not through with you yet. There are a few questions I want to ask you." He looked at Satterton. "I have your permission to ask Mr. Tharny a few questions?"

"Yes—go ahead", assented Satterton. "Ask direct questions, Mr. Williams, but let there be no quibbling or merely controversial argument."

"Did the engineer in charge of the work on the land you say you optioned near mine, send his reports to you?" asked Bradshaw of Tharny.

"He certainly did", was the answer.

"And no duplicates came to the main office here?"

"No. I was quite capable of forwarding the reports after I received them."

"That's all."

Then Bradshaw detailed his interview with Tharny in the latter's office at Butte. Addressing Tharny directly, he said:

"I know you to have had a call from one of the most despicable agitators in the entire northwestern mining region—an agitator who would stoop to any low trick, and while I am aware that he might call unsolicitedly at any man's office, yet I do not put it past you to have gone so far as to conspire with him to try to cause trouble on my property for your own purpose."

It was a random shot, but at any rate Tharny flushed

and then went pale. "It's not so—not so", he muttered defiantly.

Then Satterton took a hand in the proceedings.

Later, other officials of the syndicate did so. The vice-president was a quiet-spoken man and his questioning of Dan, the lawyer and the manager, was very shrewd and very searching.

Next, Dan's attorney made an excellent statement—pointed, plain, sincere.

Finally Satterton began to draw the meeting to an end.

"Will you leave your reports, your certified option copies and whatever other data you care to have us consider, with us for our study?" he asked.

"Certainly", replied Dan promptly.

"Would you, gentlemen", and Satterton nodded at Dan and his two companions, "mind retiring to my office?"

The three men rose.

An hour later, Satterton opened the door giving access from the directors' room to his office, and paused in the doorway.

"Gentlemen—we are not prepared to give you our decision now. Will it be agreeable to you to appear here at eleven o'clock tomorrow morning?" Then by way of gratuitous information, "We are consulting with Mr. Tharny—and we wish to get in touch with the engineer who was in charge of the work for Mr. Tharny. Mr. Tharny says he happens to be in Butte right now and we can question him via long-distance telephone."

At the appointed hour the following morning, all the interested parties were on hand and in their places. All the reports Dan had submitted, he found neatly folded on the table before him.

Satterton rose, cleared his throat, fixed his eyeglasses on his nose and referred to a page of notes in his hand. Then looking over his glasses at Bradshaw, he gave the syndicate's findings, tersely and briefly, while Bradshaw's manager held his breath.

"We—a—we will accept your offer", he said and sat down.

A smile broke over Dan's face and the lawyer, too, was smiling, while the manager drew a deep breath.

"Gentlemen, I appreciate your findings", Bradshaw said. His heart was singing in him. He had won!—for a victory it certainly had been.

As they all stood up and mingled, Satterton spoke to Dan.

"Mr. Williams, can I see you in my office?"

"Certainly", said Dan and accompanied the president there.

Satterton seated himself at his desk, Dan taking the chair at the side opposite the president. And now Satterton was smiling—not even a hint of steely determination in his eyes.

"Let's smoke", invited Satterton producing a box of cigars, passing it over to Dan and helping himself.

"Mr. Williams", the older man went on, "I'm a great admirer of nerve, and you're nervy."

Dan smiled at the praise, and Satterton continued.

"I don't mind letting you in on a few details. Don't run away with the notion that this syndicate is a philanthropic institution. It isn't. But we are on the square", and he straightened his shoulders. "When Mr. Tharny suggested the purchase of your property, that appealed to us. Some of our best Coeur d'Alene properties were down, and we needed a going mine at once. Your property looked like a life-saver. Mr. Tharny's plan

as to buying it seemed to come so pat that we gave him carte blanche as to acquiring it. But then soon after that our Coeur d'Alene properties were reopened full blast and we began getting into Alaska very, very deeply. We are busy with some mighty big projects, Williams."

"And so you could afford to let me escape", remarked Dan with a smile.

"Well", said the other slowly, "I wouldn't just put it that way. We don't want anything through chicanery, I'll tell you that. Really, I think you owe us your appreciation, Williams, for gathering up those loose options for you. Now that you've got them they may save you a lot of bother in future. Anyhow, they make your property practically litigation-proof as to vein rights. You see that, don't you?"

"You remember I offered you a ten percent increase on them", remarked Dan.

Satterton threw back his head and laughed. Then he straightened up and looked closely at Bradshaw.

"If we made a proposition to you—would you consider coming in with us?" he asked.

"I surely thank you for your implied expression of confidence", Bradshaw replied, "but I'd like to keep on working this thing of my own through along lines I've mapped out."

"Then all the luck in the world to you, young man", said Satterton of the Syndicate.

But there was one thing Satterton did not tell Dan. The latter heard of it later from his lawyer who had obtained it from inside sources.

The "consulting" with Tharny of which Satterton had spoken the day before meant as grilling an examination for that individual as it ever falls to the lot of an unworthy witness to receive.

At the end of two hours of cross-examining, Tharny had been reduced to the stage which might best have been described as absolutely wilted.

Then, for some hours more, there had been a searching examination of Bradshaw's reports, followed by a long-distance telephonic talk with the engineer who had submitted his reports to Tharny.

Subsequently, Satterton had requested that Tharny come to his office the following afternoon.

Dan and his two associates were on their way back to Montana when Tharny entered Satterton's sanctum. And Satterton was a man all of cold steeliness then.

"Gerald", he said with the crispness of brittle ice in his tone, "your father was my best friend. I gave you a splendid chance. I'm through—so are you so far as this syndicate is concerned. Here is a check for five thousand dollars—and a new man will take over our affairs in Montana.

Tharny mechanically folded the check and placed it in his wallet.

"So you're all through with me?" he asked.

"Absolutely."

"Oh, I guess I can get along", said Tharny impudently. "There's money to be made in the promoting game—the suckers are not all dead." He stood up, his manner still impudent. "And I might as well tell you right now that you never could have beaten Williams in court. I hate him all the way through, and I'd have liked to have seen you ruin him, but he held all the trumps this time. I thought I could run a good bluff on him."

"It looked like a possible chance for you to squeeze a little plunder out of him, eh? Well, I'm mighty glad you barked up the wrong tree", and Satterton looked contemptuously at Tharny. "The Syndicate owes him a vote

of thanks for showing you up. This Syndicate certainly objects to such methods as yours."

"I don't suppose the high and mighty Syndicate would object to my going where I want to", said Tharny with sneering sarcasm.

"Gerald", returned Satterton with subdued emphasis, "for all I care you can go to hades!"

But when, as he left Spokane, Tharny took stock of his situation he was not so complacent. He was heavily involved financially and the five thousand dollars he had received from the Syndicate, would not carry him far. True, he might venture more deeply into mining promotion, but it might be precarious if followed along the lines he most favored. He narrowed his eyes and smiled craftily as another thought came to banish his apprehension.

There was Mary Norton.

CHAPTER XXIII

IN SPRINGTIME

The following spring came early, and when the Nortons, returning to their home at Butte, had time to look about them, they found ample evidence of a rapidly coming summer.

"Talk about feeling the call of the wild", declared Norton to his sister at the breakfast table one morning. "If ever I wanted to get out into the hills, now is the time. I never knew the real summer season to come so quickly around here as it has this year."

"And where does your Highness intend going?" asked his sister, with the casualness of one devoting earnest consideration to half a grape-fruit.

"I haven't mapped out an exact itinerary as yet", her brother replied. "I had rather intended to start from Anaconda and go westward. I want to see what's doing up in that region, and I may go for some distance over the ranges there."

"Quite an ambitious journey", said Mary.

"And there is no mountain trip can beat it", Norton rejoined enthusiastically. "It would be a bit too rough for you, Mary, but it's one that our friend, Walton, ought to take with me. If he would write half of what such a trip would show him, he would have a splendid account."

"Write it yourself", said his sister half-banteringly.

"Don't think I wouldn't be willing to tackle it, young lady", he replied.

"Oh, as for that, you would tackle most anything and come off the victor too", she said with a smile that brought an answering one from him, for to see the beauty of Mary Norton's smile and not respond with one would be admission of an insufferable grouch.

"No—I'm not in the writing line", he stated, taking a cigar from his pocket. "But if I could write I might say some interesting things about the afternoon view from the eastern slope of the Blue Eyed Nellie hill west of Anaconda, with the marvelous Rockies on the south—one of them, famous mountain that it is, like the semicircular crater of a gigantic volcano, the nearer side crumbled away and the remaining edge tipped with snow the year around; the fertile valley with its winding stream and little silvery lagoons here and there; with the white ribbon of road along the northern hill-sides from Anaconda, away on the east, right up and along the foot of the Blue Eyed Nellie hill itself. And the view from there at night!—Walton should see it. And then the country farther along!"—he paused to light his cigar—"It all is an inspiration. I wish I could tell you exactly how it is—as I have seen it."

"Why, I think you are doing splendidly", his sister declared. "If you would write it down just as you have seen it, you would be writing a veritable prose poem."

He smiled fondly at her.

"Flatterer!" he exclaimed. "But what a charming flatterer."

"And you think you will continue on for a much longer distance than that?" she asked.

"That is my idea", he replied. "One of the mining magazines had a very interesting article last week about

the M. N. Mine over on the other slope of the range out that way, and I want to take a look at it. I understand that some remarkably good gold ore is being mined there. I've been informed that D. Williams who is in charge of the mine, has returned from California and is up there now, and so I think this would be a very good time to go over and see him and the property. There might be an opportunity to become interested over in that section. I've always had faith in it."

He arose and his sister did likewise to accompany him to the vestibule, where he picked up and drew on automobile gauntlets.

"Your journey may be going to be somewhat rough", she said, "but still I would have invited myself to go along if it were not that Margaret is due this week."

"That's a fact—I must admit I'd forgotten", he remarked. "I suppose there would be no use extending an invitation to Walton to go along with me. Doubtless he knows she is coming, and it would take more than a trip into the hills, however delightful, to entice him away from Butte at this time."

"I rather think that is right", observed his sister.

"Now look here, young lady", said Norton placing his hands on her shoulders and looking down at her, "I don't pretend to be able to pry into the mysteries of the feminine mind nor to judge the secret theories of a woman's heart, but I do know that the whims of woman-kind have raised the—have made earth a very part of the Inferno for many a good man, and all done so innocently, so inadvertently and also so charmingly. What I am getting at is that Margaret Hanlon—well, my judgment is that Walton is the sort of man who only has one real affair of the heart in his life, and that one truly is enough to last such a man for his entire existence. I

don't usually notice such things, but I would have to be entirely bereft of my powers of observation not to notice Walton's regard for Margaret."

"Oh, cleverest and keenest of all brothers!" exclaimed Mary, smiling up at him with the sidelong look of a charm which he, as well as any other man, quickly recognized. "And have you really seen all that too?"

"Do you think it's right?" he asked.

"And why not?"

"Of course, it's none of my business", he said hastily, "but I do like Walton. He's a real man and if Margaret is trifling with him, I think she—Oh hang it, Mary, he's not the kind of man who ought to be picked out for that sort of thing."

Norton took his hat from the rack and stood with one hand on the door knob.

"Why, I'm sure, DeWitt, I don't know that Margaret is deliberately trying to mislead him. I don't know that Margaret thinks any more of him than she does of any other good friend. She is interested in his career, but that might be in an entirely impersonal way."

"Well, I may be wrong", rejoined her brother, "but I shouldn't imagine that a woman could show the interest in a man's career that she seems to have in Walton's, without really having more than just a Platonic regard for him, or at any rate making him think she has."

Then he kissed her and left.

Mary returned to the breakfast table and seated there, rested her elbow on the table, her chin in her cupped hand, and gazed abstractedly ahead of her. Finally, as she rang for the maid, she remarked to herself:

"Well, I'm sure I don't know."

* * * * *

Bradshaw, returning from a joyous sojourn with

Uncle Sim and Aunt Ruth in California, the happier since he was able to leave them in far better circumstances than they ever before had enjoyed, stopped over in Butte to see Walton, and arranged to be on his way to his mine the following morning.

"Had the time of my life", he told the newspaperman. "Talk about the prodigal son returning home—what I wrote you about the reception I got didn't half tell it. And, I certainly enjoyed to the very limit the veranda in the evening time and the silvery moonlight and the roses and all the other features that help to make the place so delightful. I couldn't get the Aunt and Uncle to move out of their cottage to a larger and more pretentious one, but finally Aunt Ruth consented to my hiring a maid for her, though the day I did that, Aunt Ruth fussed around declaring that, in consequence, she wouldn't have a thing to keep her busy in future. Yet that evening on the veranda, when the dear old man was pottering around in the garden, she put her arm around my neck with that rare and sweet affection with which she had won my boyhood's heart. She drew my head down until my cheek was close beside hers and—I felt unworthy and insignificant and if ever the thought came to me that all the strivings and attainments of man are unimportant and unlovely compared to the love of a good woman, it did then. Dear Aunt Ruth never had chick of her own, but she's the through and through mother, with mother knowledge and love and understanding. She had me for years and I know I was enough to take the place of a dozen children—in causing her concern and work, I mean. Then, on another day, I went with Uncle Sim up to the graves on the hill-side where my grandfather, the sturdy pioneer whose adventures I lived in my boy dreams and playings, and where my grandmother and

the father and mother I never knew, are sleeping. I wanted to arrange for some adornment of those hallowed couches, but I saw that Uncle Sim's ideas about it were right. He said no ornamentation could begin to equal the noble trees guarding those last resting places, and nothing could take the place of the flowers growing over and around that sacred spot, as if protecting the sleepers with a gentle covering. Granite would shut them away too much, as it were, from the flowers, the trees, the song of the birds and the blue sky. We arranged for proper monuments and the care of the graves which Uncle Sim supervises so conscientiously.

At Walton's request, Bradshaw told him of various other details of his visit, and he pleased the newspaperman by telling him of the regard the good Uncle and Aunt had for him, too.

"They've taken you right into the family", said Dan. Then he spoke in a more serious tone. "I've come back, John, determined to push on to greater, many times greater things. I am anxious to get back to the mine and go on with my work there." He laughed. "I'll admit I have a boyish desire to enjoy the new bungalow there. There is something connected with it that I wanted to wait until now to tell you about. It has a feature entirely for you—a writing room, a study all your own."

"For me?" asked Walton delighted.

"You bet!" exclaimed Bradshaw heartily. "You can come up there and write your head off. The place is all electric lighted—you know we use electric power all through the mine now. The bungalow has every possible convenience—all I've been telling you of it can't do justice to the subject, though I know it will have surprises for me, too, for Paddy Skiff and his 'Missus' and my

artistic little Japanese, Nip, were superintending the finishing touches and the installation of the fixtures and furniture I had ordered, while I was in California. The bungalow is not far from the old cabin. You remember that old cabin, don't you John?"

"Well rather", declared the newspaperman. "That early winter visit I had up there with you was really an enjoyable experience."

"When can you get away to come up there again?" asked Bradshaw.

"Soon, I hope, though, as usual, this is a busy season for me", replied Walton.

"Tip me the word any time and the place is yours", declared the miner. "My good and faithful retainer, Nip, hasn't half enough to do as it is. So hurry along."

"What is a man with anarchistic principles buried deep in him doing with an artistic or any other kind of a retainer?" queried the writer. "This is getting to be a funny world."

Walton liked to joke with his friend because, to his own delight, Bradshaw's responses were keenly in kind. They understood each other thoroughly.

"Of course, what you say of there being anarchy in me is gross slander", retorted Bradshaw. "Yet after all, my captious friend, the best way to reform a radical, perhaps, might be to give him luxuries."

Walton laughed.

"That's a radicalism worthy of my friend, Bradshaw —beg pardon, Williams", he said.

"You won't have to beg pardon on that score much longer", Dan informed him. "Soon I shall be getting back to the use of the Bradshaw part of my name, because it is necessary. Thus far I have kept scrupulously out of newspapers so as not to become advertised, and

my chief office man has made the contracts, while Paddy Skiff has supervised most of the hiring of men, but my interests are spreading, and I guess I'll have to subdue the Williams portion of the title to its initial status, and let Daniel Bradshaw blossom out into the sunlight once more."

"Whenever that is done, then welcome to our city, Dan Bradshaw!" exclaimed Walton.

"By the way, John", went on the miner. "I want to leave a bit more money here for you to use in fixing up Crunch when you get a chance."

Walton shook his head and sighed.

"I've not only fixed him up, dressed him up and pointed out the course of righteousness to him on my own account a dozen times, but by reason of your generosity as well. However, I'll be glad to try it again."

He regarded Bradshaw with the drooping of his eyelids that gave him a quizzical look, characteristic of his semi-joking moods.

"Did you ever try figuring out the pathway of a whirlwind?" he asked.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE M. N.

Proceeding through the picturesque valleys and over the always interesting mountain lands west of Anaconda, DeWitt Norton and the three men with him made steady enough progress, though pausing at each important district. Riding horses specially adapted for such touring, and with two pack horses laden with complete camp equipment, they enjoyed every moment of their outing. The men with Norton were from his own organization and as loyal to him for their liking of the man as because of the positions they had in his employ. One was from his general office and two from his mining force. They wanted no cook or camp tenders, for these men had been on outing trips many times before. They knew how to make camp in expert fashion and they knew camp culinary art. Norton, himself, took his turn at cooking with all the relish of the man who knows camp life and enjoys every feature of it. When the others told him his flapjacks were good, he seemed as well pleased as if he just had been informed that a promising new ore lead had been found in one of his mining properties. That was the kind of a man he was—it was a good index to his character.

There are such men in the West today, even though many of the mannerisms and democracies of Pioneer days are memories rather than facts now. Yet the vir-

ility and the ways of the Pioneers have always been too important a portion of the fabric of the West ever to be anything less than a vital part of it. There always will be the Western man, and he has a versatility with nothing of artfulness about it. He is at home roughing it in the hills—he lies down in peace and comfort beside his campfire after a day's hard riding. He is miner and woodsman and reader of the language of the trail. And he revels in things of culture. He knows and understands the very best of paintings and other works of art. He makes an interesting study and not a habit of literature. He studies and understands the messages of far distant countries he may visit. He is as much at ease trying to master the intricacies of a Buddhist temple as he is on the peak of a Rocky mountain range. He has just as much sureness and is equally at home in a fashionable eastern drawing room as in the depths of a western mine. The music of the wind through the pines and of grand opera alike are known to and understood by him. He is the true, adaptable, red-blooded American. Where he comes from there is no provincialism. Often the man from the East, the man from the South, the man from the Middle-west can be told on the instant. Perhaps so can the man from the West, but not by reason of any mannerisms of speech, of action or viewpoint, but by that intangible yet emphatic strength, eye-to-eye look, directness, good-natured firmness—like a velvet-covered rock.

The Norton party rambled over hills and mountains, and saw entrancing views in morning, afternoon and at evening. They stood amazed at the marvelous sunsets that turned skyline over the mountains and high heavens into amazing color combinations. They boated on little lakes set like water jems among regal moun-

tains. They fished in willow-bordered streams. They rode by moonlight along mountain highways that led under trees, over hillocks and beside steep grades, with the stars so agleam as, seemingly, to cover the world about them with an iridescent star-dust. Their errant fancies then could have full play. Every tree-arched stretch of road, with moonlight wavering through the branches, might be a carefully prepared highway straight to looming, battlemented castle that in daylight was a high and grim cliff. And when they rode in moonlight near a lake high up in the mountain woodland country, there came to them a warmed breath of zephyr bearing a tang of the water so that they seemed nearing the shore of a land of enchantments with all the peoples of romance busied in romantic careers about them—and the gaining of the very next park-like rise promising to disclose to them a wide-reaching sea of gently rolling silver.

And from all available places en route, Norton telephoned to his sister at Butte telling of the party's progress.

So at length they came to that slope of mountain range down which they were to take their way to the M. N. mine. Even before they reached it, they had a splendid view of it from the summit. Casual inspection at that distance showed its completeness of equipment to the extent which its development warranted. There was a trimness, a compactness about its surface structures, an efficient-appearing, methodical arrangement of its powerfully built steel gallows frame and hoisting plant, ore bins and mill, as well as other surface details, that could not do otherwise than please so well versed a mining-man as DeWitt Norton.

The mine boarding-house, flanked by two rows of

small, neat frame houses, stood among the trees on a more level shoulder of mountain-side like a miniature hamlet in a most pleasing setting of woodland. And, in truth, outside the confines of the mine yard, it was evident that care had been taken not to disturb too much of the mountain and forest attractiveness that had been there before the hidden ore treasure had been uncovered, excepting, of course, where clearings had been made for new workings, where roadways had been cut through and trestles built for aerial tramways.

As Norton and his men wound down the pathways among the trees, he commented on the scene that had been disclosed to them.

"Whoever planned it all out knew his business", he declared. "The mine yard arrangement is fine. There is no chance for lost motion there. The main plant and the ore bins and the timber-framing mill and the big mine dump are in just the right locations."

As they approached nearer the mine, the usual evidences of mining activity so well known to Norton and the others with him, came to them like a friendly welcoming voice. They dismounted at the small building, where a sign over the door read: "Office—M. N. Mine."

"I suppose that M. N. stands for 'Montana Notion' or something like that", remarked one of Norton's men.

"Or perhaps, 'My Notion'", said Norton.

The young man in charge of the office informed them that D. Williams was out inspecting work on a new claim he had acquired nearby, but even then was expected back. And as they waited, Norton put in a long-distance call for his sister. In fact, they had not long to wait before a close-bearded, well-built, corduroy-suited, blue-shirted and booted man, with stiff-brimmed hat of cowboy style tilted a bit down over his eyes, arrived and the office

man in charge told Norton, in an aside, that D. Williams had come.

Norton immediately went forward.

"Mr. Williams?" he asked.

"Yes", said the new arrival.

"I am DeWitt Norton of Butte", Norton informed him as they shook hands.

"I knew that", the other said with a smile; "I am very glad to see you here."

Then Norton introduced his three companions to Dan who, in turn, courteously presented his visitors to his office force.

"And now you and your friends", he said addressing Norton, "must come up to the bungalow as my guests. I insist on your making it your headquarters."

Though Norton protested that he and his party had ample camping equipment and did not want to inconvenience their host, desiring from him only the privilege of a location where they could pitch their camp, Bradshaw would not take that as an answer, but quietly and firmly insisted on their coming with him. Mounting their horses, and with Bradshaw leading the way on his, they proceeded along a wide and well made roadway that wound in and out among the thickly set trees. When they had arrived out of sight and almost out of sound of the mine workings, they suddenly emerged into a widely cleared place in the midst of which stood Bradshaw's bungalow, an ample dwelling with wide-sweeping roof planes and extensive, vine-shaded veranda from which the view was wonderful. On the side nearest them they could see the broad, huge stone chimney of the fireplace. The clearing in front of the bungalow was more in the nature of a well kept lawn and there were carefully tended flower beds. At the rear of the house were rows

of a vegetable garden in full culture, and beyond that a poultry yard. Within the fringe of trees at the farther side stood a big, log stable and several sheds.

"A dandy place", declared Norton enthusiastically as they paused to survey the scene.

"And complete as it could be made", said Bradshaw with a smile. "It's really new to me, too, for it was just being completed and otherwise being made ready for the furnishings I had ordered for it when I left for California a few weeks ago. But my foreman, Paddy Skiff, and his good wife, who conducts the boarding house at the mine, gave it kind attention and, with Nip, the presiding genius of the place, arranged the fixtures and furniture and had the garden fixed up and attended to various other details so that I found the place just about this way when I returned. Nip really did well for I did not have to rearrange much of the furnishings to suit my own taste. My original cabin is over among the trees there", and he pointed to one side. "I am preserving that as a memento. I had the stable and sheds put up some time ago because, though now the roadway to town is good and I am planning on having a garage put up and an automobile installed, I have to use horses for going up and down the mountain roads and trails that would be too dangerous for machines."

They were continuing on their way to the front of the house, when around a corner of it came dashing an Airedale frantic with joy at the return of its master. Also there strolled into view, stopping now and then to munch grass, a small, gray burro.

"There", said Bradshaw pointing to the burro, "comes the most privileged pensioner on the place. That is Don Quixote who came with me on my first prospecting trip into these hills. All he has to do now is eat and sleep

and he even has the right to walk all over the lawn, much to Nip's disgust."

When they reached the front steps, a man came running from the stable to take the horses, while on the top step stood a bowing, smiling little Japanese in immaculate white duck suit.

"If there is anything you want and don't see, ask Nip", said Bradshaw waving a hand at Nip, who grinned and bowed the more.

The visitors sighed with contentment the moment they entered the bungalow.

A wide doorway opened from the bench-provided veranda directly into the living room that extended entirely across the front of the house and was lighted by big, double windows. Rugs covered the room's hardwood floor and there were big, easy chairs and settees of leather and wicker. The big library table in the center was strewn with magazines and held smoker's articles. Much of the right end was taken up by the fireplace of roughly hewn stone, while at the opposite end stood a billiard table. A pianola-piano and its record cabinet were against the wall opposite the front door and between the archway that opened into the dining room and a door that gave access to a hallway. A chandelier in the form of wide-spreading antlers, with each prong tip an incandescent light bulb, was pendent from the center of the beamed ceiling, while the several wall brackets each with its electric bulbs, were also cunningly contrived small antlers.

When his guests had rested and been regaled with the refreshments Nip deftly produced and served, Bradshaw showed them about the place. They fell ready victims to its charms.

After supper there came an hour of billiards, during

which Bradshaw received a telephonic report from Foreman Paddy Skiff who had come up out of the mine and was at the office, and with him Bradshaw arranged for a visit underground for his guests and himself the next morning.

There then came a response to the long-distance call Norton had put in and Bradshaw called him to the telephone.

"This is DeWitt Norton talking", Norton told Central. "Kindly switch me on the Monticana private line."

In the interval of waiting for his sister to speak, he remarked laughingly to the others:

"Imagine this kind of reporting home in the days of the Pioneers."

Before he retired that night, Norton wrote a letter to his sister and placed it in the mail bag in the living room to be taken to town next day and posted.

And thus he told her, after detailing the delights and some of the experiences of his journey :

D. Williams received us here at the M. N. with every possible courtesy. We are now quartered at his remarkable bungalow—remarkable for one at a mine out in the mountains. We came prepared to rough it to the extent of sleeping under canvas while here and instead we are in a most modern hunting-lodge sort of bungalow with a living-room that would win your heart. There are other rooms in keeping with it—a gem of a dining room, a fine kitchen and pantries, light, airy bedrooms, and Williams' private study, in which I am writing now, that is a dream. It is like a small library and den combined. He also has had a special study fitted up in most convenient way for the use of a friend who is a writer and who is to have exclusive use of that room whenever he comes here. Lucky

friend! Everything about the place is complete right down to the cement-lined cellar where there is an excellent heating system and splendidly stocked store rooms and other desirable features. So instead of roughing it in tents, here we are enjoying life most comfortably in a modern, electric-lighted dwelling.

Norton even went into detail in describing the furnishings and chandeliers of the living room.

Then he went on:

The view from the veranda is soul delighting, especially for one who has real understanding of western mountain scenery and sunsets.

Mr. Williams indeed is a splendid fellow to meet. A big, vigorous chap, very quiet spoken—I should say, reserved in his way—he at once gives the impression of being very much a real man.

Somehow, most peculiarly, he gives me the impression of a former acquaintanceship—that is to say, I somehow vaguely seem to have seen or spoken to him before or to someone somewhat like him, though I can't for the life of me think when or where.

What I have seen of the mine looks mighty good, though an underground inspection will be necessary to show me what it is really like. Williams tells me that before the end of another year he will have three more shafts in operation on adjacent properties. Then good-bye to much of the remaining woodland and mountain scenery around here. Williams says that he always will insist on the preservation of his original cabin and the trees that surround it and his new bungalow. He also says that the freedom of the mountain-side always is to be had by Don Quixote, the burro that carried his equip-

ment on his first prospecting tour—that is, the Don is to have it as long as said Don lasts. The stumbling of this little burro on the trail is generally accredited with having uncovered the signs which led to the finding of the ore of the M. N., which initials I think stand for Montana something, though Williams has not yet told me what.

When Norton, his men and Bradshaw stepped off the cage of the M. N., at noon next day, they had, with Paddy Skiff as cicerone, viewed much of the underground workings and the Butte men if they said nothing, at least formed the opinion that the M. N. was a splendid property and was developing into a truly great mine. They saw that the workings, carried along in real workmanship manner, not only had developed strong leads from which ore was being taken, but also had blocked out a big ore reserve.

"With depth", said Bradshaw to Norton, "we will be able to increase our tonnage materially and so our working force will have to be considerably larger. That will be gratifying to me in that it will enable us to give employment to more men."

When they had changed from their "digging clothes" to their other apparel, the party inspected the boarding-house and viewed the neat and comfortable little houses near it.

"This is the town", Bradshaw informed the visitors, "and its name is Skiffville in honor of our worthy foreman."

The afternoon was devoted to a general inspection of the locality, including new prospects and the like, and then back to the bungalow went the party for what Norton aptly said were "all the comforts of home."

That evening, while Norton's three companions entertained themselves with billiards and the pianola, Norton and Bradshaw sat out on the veranda and watched the last of the sinking sun's rays, the shadows steal over the mountain land before them, and the stars come out. They smoked not merely for personal gratification, but also in furtherance of friendliness—a way men have when smoking together.

"If it weren't for all this wealth of scenery around the place", Norton remarked as they were talking of what they had viewed that day, "I would say the M. N. indeed was right in the heart of the Butte district. The ship-shape look of the mine—that's not just a mere compliment, Mr. Williams—certainly is like that of the Butte mines. Your style of mining—in fact, the entire method you use here is reminiscent of the Butte way, and that, indeed, is a good system."

He looked at the other man.

"Have you ever had much chance to inspect any of the Butte mines?"

Bradshaw flicked the ash from his cigar.

"Yes—I have seen several of them", he replied.

"Of course you understand", went on Norton, "that there always is a standing invitation for you to inspect the Mont or any of our properties, and if you ever come to Butte without letting me know of it I'll resent it—indeed so."

"I shall be glad sometime to avail myself of your kind offer", said Bradshaw, with just a suggestion of a smile.

"If I do say it", remarked Norton, "the Mont is a remarkable mine—one of the best of its kind."

"I quite agree with you", said the other.

"Then you have seen it?"

"I know of it. Also I know of your employment

methods, Mr. Norton, and permit me to say that I heartily admire them. I realize that employers cannot always know of every small detail connected with even that vital proposition of affording employment, especially as regards big properties, but your way of at least trying to have the right men look after the employing and along your ideas is pleasing. I have tried to be as fair."

"Mr. Williams", said Norton, "your candid compliment is very gratifying to me. Running a big mine with consideration only for its producing phase is not all there is to it by any manner of means, as you too know. I consider the matter of employment a most important feature."

"I entirely agree with you and admire you for your view of the matter", said the other. "A man who can give employment ought to be delighted to do so and, if that is the sort of man he is, he gives it in the right way."

"Your ideas are interesting", said Norton. "Please go on."

His host did so, speaking in a low, even tone.

"We all can have theories on this big subject of employment, but sometimes they do not work out when put to the test. The chief obstacle in the way of carrying out equitable and just employment ideas often is caused by the problems of opposition which some of the employes themselves present. I have found that out. Generally speaking, however, there is a way of affording employment by those who can give it that makes for the betterment of all conditions. Now let us consider the M. N. in an impersonal way. Here is a mine discovered by a man through his own efforts. By reason of it, he builds up an industry that employs a considerable number of men. In finding this mine he did not deprive any

other man of anything. It is really that much more of a benefit to the world. It is his property, yet he feels he owes a duty to humanity to which, after all, the benefits placed in and on this world potentially belong. But the reward of his finding the mine and starting a new industry is the ownership of the property, and properly so. The fulfillment of his obligation to humanity's equity in it certainly is not in turning it over to some sort of political organization which says its mission and purpose are to take over all the possessions of the world, doubtless because that would be the easy way to achieve success, but is in the quality of the employment he gives. The proper sort of employment is not oppressive, not a hindrance, nor does it deprive any man of his right to continue on his own way if he sees fit. Since it is a fact that the opening of this mine deprived no one of anything, and its discovery did benefit many by affording new and more employment, then it seems to me that the manner in which its employment is given cannot irk anyone and should not arouse the slightest opposition."

"And that way is?"

"You would care to hear it?"

"I certainly would."

"But I don't want to bore you with my ideas."

"Please go on."

"Then", said Bradshaw, "I'll admit that my method is much like yours. Industry and Employment are not, as some might think, eleemosynary institutions. Nor should they be down-grinding ones either. The employers who know that when they give their employes the best opportunities and treatment the latter usually will make good progress and do their best work have arrived at a very happy conclusion. That is not necessarily a coldly economic way to look at it since the employé,

while making better returns also, is inspired to work onward and upward. The members of those cults, which fight work, attack that theory, but it must be remembered that fighting that uncompromising law of Nature, Work, is their chief business. If they would put in as much time and effort working as they do opposing work, they would be of far more benefit to the world and would be vastly more content. . . . I pay my men good wages. They are encouraged to save, and of course I'll admit that their location out here helps them to do that. I do all I can to look after their material welfare. The men have a hospital association which does not charge an initiation fee, but taxes each member a dollar a month. I maintain an entire ward in a hospital in town for the association. The dollar which each member pays to the association insures him or the members of his family, if he has one here, free medical treatment in that ward, the association monthly dues going to pay the association doctor, whom I nominated and the members elected. The boarding-house rates are exceedingly moderate and the men who have families and use the houses, pay just enough rent to return a fair rate of interest on the cost of building the houses and the expenditure in keeping them in first class repair. The men, by their own votes, chose the sliding wage scale system with a specified minimum; the wage scale here being the same and depending on the Butte wage scale as long as the sliding scale system prevails there. The decision of the men in that regard has become a fixed rule of the working system here, and so no contract is needed to insure it. I watch my men and try to advance those who show the ability to warrant it. At my request, the men have elected a grievance committee, which has the right to decide the merit of any grievance sent to it by any employé, and if

it deems the complaint thus made to be unfair, it so notifies the employe in question. If the committee thinks the grievance fair, it notifies me of it, and we meet in what we call the council room in the boarding-house and discuss it. If, on my part, I have a grievance I submit it to the committee and we discuss it. The committee thus, as it were, has a sort of supervisory control of grievances, is strictly on its honor and eliminates the chance of any injustice manifesting itself—and when you put men on their honor you, at least, tempt to the surface the best qualities in them. The committee, thus far, has only notified me of two grievances and I have notified it of one—mine being against the attempt at agitation in the mine by a certain miner who was warned by the committee to desist and who was fired by me when he refused to behave himself. The men have frowned on all attempts to form a union here. They like my method and, besides, they do not want to pay union dues, strike benefits or be bothered by agitators who sometimes creep into such organizations in the guise of being good union organizers. If the men here ever want to form a union I will not oppose it, just so it is a bona fide union. I won't stand for an agitator round the place", Bradshaw went on and his words held almost a snap in them. "I'd close this property tight as a drum before I'd submit to the dictates of any agitator or agitators—and I think I can tell when a man's really sincere or just a disturber."

Then he resumed his even tone.

"Like you, Mr. Norton, I do not ask any man who works for me what his religion is, his politics or what his personal views might be. All I contract for are his good services. I don't pamper anyone around here in idleness—that would be doing any good man an injus-

tice. It would be as bad as over-working him. Fortunately, in this western country, there is a dearth of down-grinding employment. I think the employer who is equitable in every respect with regard to his employés does a real good for humanity's cause, which is not the case with the employer sometimes to be found in eastern factories and the like, who grinds his employés down in every way and then splurges before the public with a big gift to some charity. Men want justice and not charity though, of course, we know there indeed are some charities such as homes for destitute girls, for orphans and the helpless aged that should be helped to the very limit."

"And are your theories working out to mutual satisfaction here?" asked Norton.

"So far—yes."

"I indeed am deeply interested in what you have said. I, too, have tried to solve problems of that sort satisfactorily—I'm trying right along", said Norton.

"Even in my limited experience", Bradshaw continued, "I have found that the problems are many and complex. There are those who are resentful of any and everything. They have no fight with anyone or any system but just resent the fact that they have to work. You see that illustrated in a small way sometimes by attendants who treat customers crustily as if they felt it an injustice to have to work—and I do not mean those made testy by unfair employment methods. It's proper enough, naturally, for a person who is ambitious to want to advance. In fact, it's the right idea, but imagining that work is something to fight against is not ambition. I have another plan for helping men employed here. Any one of them who has the ambition to go out on a legitimate prospecting trip, knows what he is doing and has

some meritorious locality in view, I grub-stake."

"Not a bad idea", said Norton.

"In your Mont mine, Mr. Norton, you have mighty good safety appliances and conveniences for the men. I, too, have gone in for that to the limit", Bradshaw informed his visitor. "Just as you have, we, too, have our 'Safety First' propaganda and 'Safety First' teams and rescue workers as well as the latest methods of mine safety equipment. I think I have about perfected a new safety mine cage clutch that will help."

"Man,—if you have done that, then you have accomplished something great!" exclaimed Norton starting up. "That is something in which I, and I think I can say all mining men, are deeply concerned. Have you a model of it? Can it be seen?"

"Come in and let me show you the plans", invited Bradshaw rising, while Norton did likewise and followed the other into Bradshaw's study, where the latter took a set of plans from his desk.

"I have applied for my patent and expect it most any time now", Bradshaw said. "Paddy Skiff has rigged up a working model of it in the mine yard. It is just a make-believe shaft which is nothing more than a three-sided affair of scaffolding, extending up from the ground and outlining in width and breadth the dimensions of a shaft, surmounted by a gallows frame, and hanging in it is a mine cage equipped with my safety clutch. When the cage is dropped from the top or from anywhere along in the improvised shaft, an idea can be had of how the safety clutch works."

"That is what I want to see first thing tomorrow", declared Norton enthusiastically, as he began examining the plans. "What gave you the idea to make such an invention?"

"A cage dropping accident", was the reply.

"Were you in it?" asked Norton.

"No", answered the other man, "but I experienced quite a fall about that time."

CHAPTER XXV

"SACRED PRECINCTS"

On his return home, DeWitt Norton had much to recount to his sister and Margaret Hanlon regarding his journey into the mountains and his visit at the M. N. mine.

His description of the bungalow at the M. N. and the various details of the property and the locality in general given to his sister, Margaret and Walton, one cheerful evening as they all sat enjoying the comfort of the Norton veranda, held his listeners' close attention.

"A remarkable place", he was saying, "and indicative of the man, D. Williams, who runs the mine. He is a type of American it does your heart good to meet. He has emphatic views on methods of employment"—Walton, under cover of the shadow about him, smiled to himself at these words—"and he talks most entertainingly, I might say convincingly."

"Another thing", said Mary Norton, "is that I like men who care for horses and dogs. To me that is an indication of a disposition that is trustworthy."

Norton spoke in bantering tone to his sister.

"I'm almost sorry now, Mary, that Williams is coming here in a couple of weeks or so, because if any susceptible young lady sees him and talks to—well, do not blame me for consequences."

"That does not alarm me", she replied in a way suit-

ed to his own. "You, of all men, DeWitt Norton, should know that the word 'susceptible' is not in my vocabulary."

"Perhaps there, but not often used", he teased her. "Well, then Margaret"—turning to the other girl—"how about you?"

"My vocabulary has the same deficiency", she answered in her cool, well-bred way.

"Your trip was wonderful", remarked Walton, directing the talk back to its former channel. "Why Montanans leave home to see mountain scenery is a mystery to me when there is a world of the best of it almost in their own back-yards."

"Why, there is no mystery about that", said Norton. "The scenery of Switzerland, for instance, has become far better known to many Montanans than that wonderful mountain country over which I have traveled, largely through the belief that if our own scenery at home is good, that a long ways off must be vastly superior. Montana is marvelously picturesque and fascinating from end to end, and especially so in its mountain regions."

"And if we lived thousands of miles away from it", said Mary, her clear, tuneful voice at its best, "we would not rest until we could come out here to see it. But being here, where we can view it, how often do we do so?"

Tharny came a little later in the evening. Since his return from his ill-starred trip to Spokane, he had been paying more assiduous court than ever to Mary Norton and never before had he exerted himself so much as now to be attentive in all those little details that women like.

To Walton, the information given by Norton that Bradshaw intended visiting in Butte and calling at the Norton home in the next couple of weeks, was news, and

he immediately came to the conclusion that in planning thus to come without saying anything to him about it, Dan was manifesting the irrepressible streak of boyishness deep in him—a quality that delighted Walton and endeared Dan the more to him. So smiling, when he thought of Bradshaw's evidently planned surprise-visit, he scrupulously refrained from referring to it when next he wrote to Dan.

At work in his office one evening, Walton received a telephone call from Norton.

"We are very eager for you to come up to the house tomorrow evening", the mine owner told him, "for we want you to meet a most interesting visitor. I'll confess now that I promised him that one of the rewards of his coming to see us would be meeting you."

The newspaperman said he would be glad to attend. After he had hung up the receiver of his desk telephone, he leaned back in his chair and laughed.

"So young Daniel is going to venture in as a social lion", he remarked to himself. "And he imagines he is going to put over a good joke on me. Well, I'll fix him—maybe."

The next evening, when Walton entered the Norton drawing room, he found DeWitt Norton, his sister, Margaret Hanlon and Dan in a congenial group conversing and awaiting his arrival.

Norton and Dan stood up as Walton approached them and Norton said: "Mr. Williams, permit me to introduce you to Mr. Walton, the distinguished editor and novelist of whom I have told you. John, I know you well remember all I've told you of Mr. Williams."

Dan looked his friend blandly in the eye and putting out his hand, said cordially, "I am honored to meet Mr. Walton. I feel as if I have known him for some time."

Walton did not give Dan the satisfaction of appearing the least puzzled. He took Dan's hand, bowed slightly and expressed his pleasure at meeting him.

Then the men seated themselves, and general conversation resumed.

"Mr. Walton, as you may know, is apt to interview you closely", remarked Norton to Dan. "As both a newspaperman and a novelist it is his prerogative to find out about everything."

Dan smiled a trifle.

"Perhaps not so much a prerogative as a special privilege." Then, turning to the newspaperman, he inquired suavely:

"Might I ask, Mr. Walton, if you are writing any more books?"

And Walton, almost unable to restrain his impulse to laugh, looked away, but Margaret supplied the answer for him, stating that the friends of Mr. Walton were urging him to remain firm in his expressed purpose to continue with his latest idea in that direction.

"If you are looking for inspiration for mountain description", said Dan to Walton, "you ought to come to my place. In fact"—addressing the others—"I am going to take this occasion to repeat the invitation I extended through Mr. Norton, and tell you that I will expect you all at my humble mountain home next week. And if Mr. Walton really will agree to come, he may find a theme for a new novel. I'll show you mountain scenery that will fascinate you every time you see it, for it is true that no matter how often you view them, the mountains are never twice the same."

So it was settled that the following week was to find the Nortons, Margaret and Walton the guests of Dan.

"What do you call your bungalow, Mr. Williams?"

asked Mary. "It must have a name."

"Mostly I refer to it as 'the shack' when talking of it to any of the boys at the mine", Dan informed her.

"That will never do", she declared. "But we will attend to that when we get there."

And she had not the faintest idea that her words, betokening an interest in something that belonged to him in a more personal way, thrilled him.

They spoke of various subjects, and while he kept up his part of the conversation, Dan also proved that better part of a good conversationalist—an attentive listener.

"Has the West always been your home?" Margaret asked him.

"I've always considered it so, even when away from it", Dan replied. "California is my native state and Montana, truly, my state by adoption; and now I know my Montana summer and winter. Part of last winter was unusually severe for me up there at the mine, in the primitive little cabin I then was using, and I discovered that while writers generally like to tell more of the mountains of summer, yet the winters there might be productive of unusual and interesting experiences too."

"You speak as one who knows", remarked Walton. "From actual experience, I mean", he added.

"Come—we want you to relate one of those experiences", demanded Norton and the two girls and Walton likewise insisted.

"I'll tell you of a curious incident at the cabin last winter", said Dan with a smile. "One very cold evening, just after a heavy fall of snow, when I was enjoying and appreciating my red-hot stove, I thought I heard a call. I bundled up and went out to investigate, and sure enough came on a man struggling through the snow towards my cabin. I helped him in, and while he was

thawing out, I fixed him up a meal. He said he was a mining engineer and that while on his way to town had wandered off the trail. If ever a man looked like a dangerous character I thought he did. However, I told him he could stay all night and prepared a 'shake-down' for him near the stove. I had some money in the cabin and supplies that were valuable at that time of the year, and the cabins of the miners were some distance away; so I kept my revolver handy. I was surprised when he drew out and looked at an exceptionally fine gold watch and, when he caught my gaze at him and the watch, he hastily replaced it. There was no doubting that we were becoming more and more suspicious of each other. The thought flashed through my mind that this watch might be part of some plunder. And the way I had stared at the watch was enough to arouse the other man's suspicion. I kept an eye on him and I knew he was doing the same with regard to me. When I told him he had better turn in near the fire, he thanked me and removed his coat and there pinned to his shirt was a fraternity pin identical with one I had in my kit. We were fraternity brothers. So we sat up to a late hour and fraternized, and we had a hearty laugh as to our former suspicions of each other. The mountain experiences he had gone through would fill a book. It was indeed odd to find that the first outsider who had come near me in a month in the midst of a severe winter up in the mountains of Western Montana was a college fraternity brother."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Mary.

"And what fraternity was it, might I ask?" inquired her brother.

Dan told him.

"My fraternity too!" exclaimed Norton standing up and extending his hand to Dan, who arose and shook

hands with Norton. Over his shoulder Norton addressed Walton. "Now, Sir Novelist—what say you to such a climax?"

"It is one", returned the newspaperman as the other men resumed their places, "that I never would dare to write in any story."

The others laughed, and then Dan remarked to Mary Norton: "If my feeble little experience merits any reward, I claim it in music from you. At 'the shack' we have a surfeit of the 'canned' variety. I never will forget what my foreman and very good friend said one evening when I took him over to play a new medley of Irish airs for him that I knew he would like. He listened carefully and after I had finished pumping the pianola in my best style, he said:

"'Ut shure do seem funny that some persun will have ta shpend a forchun larnin' ta play wid th' han's wat an-y wan kin grind out by poompin' wid their fate an' no edikashun at all.'"

"Perhaps your foreman also might say", laughed Mary as she went to the piano, "'the less musical trainin' an' the more poompin; the less painful maybe for all concerned.'

She played for them, with soulful understanding, Chopin's lilting "Fantaisie-Impromptu" and followed that with a dashing Bohemian melody. She called Margaret over to sing for them a charming Saint-Saens selection, a bit from "Samson and Delilah" which suited her melodious contralto voice, and which was Walton's favorite. It, too, brought a demand for more.

And while the spell of melody held them, vivid thoughts passed through Bradshaw's mind. He recalled the look of Mary Norton and the voice of her the first time he had seen her—on the road above Carty's. What-

ever he had thought of her before; whatever of a stimulus to his ambition she had been, he saw now that not even his most ardent dreaming of her had pictured the girl as she really was. Her beauty was not merely superficial, but was the reflection of the soul of her. She was a girl and yet a woman—presiding over her brother's household had brought out womanly qualities perhaps sooner than otherwise might have been the case. There was a sweet graciousness about her and yet a strength of opinion not disquieting nor aggressive, that went well with her sureness of poise.

The other girl, Margaret Hanlon, with her aristocratic cast of countenance, her blue-blackness of hair and cool, calmness of manner, was of a very different type. A beautiful woman, too, she was not one ever to make the appeal to Bradshaw as had Mary Norton, whereas for the studious Walton, Margaret Hanlon outshone all other women.

Mary Norton, so Bradshaw felt sure, was one to aid a man, to stimulate him and yet make him manifest his own best efforts. And all the time she would be dependent on his care and his strength and always needful of his love, which would have to be a clean and a true and a lasting love, or else this girl of womanly strength and womanly weakness, of womanly self-reliance and womanly dependence would fade and droop and sink away like a lovely, fading, drooping flower. But in the love of the man worthy of her, what could not such a woman be and do? Such a woman would give all or nothing.

Then the mountain man thought of a dingy, little shoe-shop with a modest little sitting-room adjoining it, presided over by a girl of buxom, womanly attractiveness and silky brown hair in coronet braids around her head. This room in which he now sat was everything

that a drawing-room in the mansion of a DeWitt Norton should be. That other one, the modest sitting-room back of the shoe-shop, had been drab, stolid, typical.

The girl, who knew this drawing-room as part of her home, was of high degree, of finest sensibilities, of thorough mentality, of a womanly fineness in every way that gratified the very soul of a man who craved the fineness of life. Argue it as philosophers will; dispute it as politicians may; sneer at it as the street corner demagogue does, there nevertheless is a fineness in life just as there is a crudeness—a fineness that has with it sincere regard for the best there is in God-given and Nature-given and man-made laws, just as there is a crudeness that is of earth earthly. The men and women with the fineness born in their souls, whether they come from the highest or the lowest or intermediate stratum of society, as mankind averages it, can no more help inclining to the fine, the true, than can the individual of crudeness of soul avoid tending the other way. Such attribute of soul may be the refining process of spiritual study and precept. Theologians grow amazed and bewildered at the very profundity of the subject, for it is, after all, like the mystery of never-ending space, or the trend of the solar system, or the unfolding of a child's mentality.

The girl to whom the little sitting-room back of the shoe-shop had been much of home, had not had conferred on her that fineness of soul. It was not the accident of her birth, nor her station in life, nor any mandate of mankind that such was her lack—but that Fate had so decreed, though sometimes it happens that a flower of unusual beauty, fragrance and inspiring quality blooms in a pitifully small garden plot amid the

dire and dank hopelessness of otherwise squalid back-yard.

Bradshaw looked at Mary Norton and saw her as she was—Patrician.

He thought of Millie Klemner as he had known her—Plebeian.

And he knew, too, that in the matter of soul desire, he truly had come into his own.

The moment that Bradshaw and Walton, leaving the Norton home together, turned out of the driveway to the thoroughfare, the miner placed a hand on his friend's arm.

"John,—I made a fool of myself tonight", he said seriously. "I'm sorry."

Walton laughed.

"Why Dan, I thought you at your best", the writer declared. "Your stories of the hills were interesting and well told. I am sure you made the hit of your young life at the Nortons' tonight."

"I was there under false pretense", said Bradshaw. "What will they think when they know who I am? What will they think of my attitude toward you?—For it was my action that gave you the cue as how to act toward me. What I did was all very puerile. I am disgusted with myself—that's all.

"You are taking it entirely too seriously, my boy", said Walton calmly. "Remember this—you are not a story-book person. Real human beings of whatever size or age keep enough of childish prankishness in their systems to enable them to deviate slightly from the conventions once in awhile, or, at least, recognize the naturalness of it making others do so. The man or woman who no longer retains that sort of ability, we allude to as crabid or crusty or soured—and such a person is not

popular. Why, man—there was nothing wrong in what you did or said at the Nortons' tonight. Indeed, there was quite an element of romance in it."

"In some ways, the entire proposition seems inordinately silly, now that I look back at it", Bradshaw persisted. "I thought it would be a good joke to meet you 'here and take you unawares. Of course, as to my going there as Williams, that was something I could not help. I'll have to rely on their generosity and their good sense to overlook it when the time comes to explain, as I candidly intend to do."

"You are seeing it my way after all", said the newspaperman, taking his friend by the arm. "As for the part concerning me—it had to be just that way to make the rest of it appear right."

"At any rate, it won't be a long continued deception", remarked Bradshaw. "As there is nothing unworthy being concealed, nor anything wrong to hide, why, I think it all may work out well enough."

"Leave it to common sense, to a sense of humor, to human love of adventure and the unusual—and to Mary Norton to straighten it all out", commented the newspaperman.

To a question asked her that same night by Mary Norton, Margaret Hanlon replied: "I'll be only too happy, Mary, to remain over and go with you and DeWitt to that ideal place of which Mr. Williams told us."

"And I am sure John Walton will enjoy it too", remarked Mary with a sidelong glance at her friend. Then apropos of nothing, she added: "DeWitt generally is a very good judge of men. He seems to be able almost instinctively to determine their dispositions. His description of Mr. Williams as a manly man I think is very proper."

"A most interesting and romantic kind of man", agreed the other girl.

And before Mary Norton glided off into the realm of dreams, there recurred to her certain characteristics of the man which she had remarked and tried to study—that seemed somewhat familiar to her, as if she had seen some man before who raised his head, chin out, the same way when he said something emphatically; who had the way, too, of looking down and slightly to one side occasionally when intently listening to some one, and who likewise had the same manner of upright set and jaw-firmness.

CHAPTER XXVI

THARNY GOES FISHING

For weeks, Tharny had been seeking an opportunity to propose to Mary Norton. Several times he had thought the moment opportune, only to find that before he could lead up to his declaration there had been interruption.

Indeed, he was almost in the mood to take a desperate chance and make his avowal even if the time and place were not as romantic as he would have liked to have them, for he counted on the romantic element as an important factor.

Matters were not progressing at all to his liking in a business way and an affiliation with the Norton family was by far his best move. He was venturing everything on it, and accordingly it keyed him up to high nervous tension.

He arranged a theater party with Mary, Margaret Hanlon and Norton as his guests, hoping that somehow the chance would be presented for a very confidential talk with Mary. His anxiety was causing him to become somewhat mentally fevered concerning the girl, and several times he caught himself up in time to avoid what he had sense enough to know would at once prove fatal to his plan.

It came to him as a shock when, on the way home, Norton told of the contemplated visit to D. Williams'

place the following week. At once the scheme suggested itself to Tharny to follow to that region and trust to luck to give him the opportunity he so eagerly sought. He knew he could not remain in town and possess his soul in patience pending her return.

"Why, I'm going out for a fishing trip next week", he announced. "Indeed, I expect to be over in the Red Flower valley district part of the time."

"Perhaps you will see us", said Mary. "Come and call on us at Mr. Williams' bungalow. I am sure Mr. Williams would be very glad to see you."

"I don't like to impose on good-nature", returned Tharny. "But I might meet you somewhere up there."

Tharny went to the town near Bradshaw's mine the day before the Nortons and Margaret Hanlon left for the M. N.

He took no fishing tackle with him, but he did take a riding suit, for he planned to do more or less touring on horseback in the vicinity of the town. Nothing like a definite plan for encountering Mary Norton, suggested itself to him, but he more than ever was possessed of the overwhelming desire to be as near her as possible—it would be far easier to endure her absence from Butte that way.

To his surprise he encountered Vignon on the second day of his arrival at his destination. Tharny was on his way to a livery stable when he met him, and he at once drew Vignon into a nearby doorway.

"What are you doing here?" Tharny demanded.

"The game's not good in Butte right now", replied Vignon with a leer. "Me an' Wilkins an' Snitch thought we would take the air for a while and maybe beat it over to the Coeur d'Alenes. We stopped off here an' I think there's something here I want to investigate. I want to

get a few more good looks at this guy Williams."

"Do you see him often?" asked Tharny.

"We seen him a few times passing along the road past our hangout, but he didn't know we was there. I hear he don't like wanderin' campers like us near his place", said Vignon with a sneering laugh.

"Where are you located?" Tharny questioned.

"In the woods off the highway that goes to his mine."

Tharny did not speak for a moment or two. Then he lowered his tone and spoke more confidentially to the other.

"But we can't do much talking here", he said finally "I'll keep in touch with you, Vignon. I'll locate your place tomorrow and we can fix things up all right. That will be a lot better than your coming in town to see me."

"No, I guess it wouldn't be a good idea for us to be seen consultin' together", Vignon remarked, the sneer still on his lips.

"And keep Wilkins and Snitch from parading around the town", Tharny cautioned.

They exchanged a few words more, and Tharny took a bill from his wallet and handed it to Vignon.

"You can't go wrong in finding the place", Vignon said as he tucked the currency away.

Bradshaw met his guests at the depot in town with a big, new touring car, and while they at first declared that it might have been more in keeping to have penetrated into his mountain retreat, as they spoke of it, with horses in real mountaineer traveling style, yet they agreed after their ride across the valley and up into the mountains that the mode of conveyance he had provided was the more conducive to comfort, especially after the long train ride.

The mountain bungalow, to which their host took

them, won the enthusiastic approval of the young women and Walton, and the repeated "I told you so" of Norton from the moment they came in sight of it.

The white-clad Nip, smiling and bowing, met them with true major-domo manner at the door, and when they entered the bungalow's cool interior, they found it had been flower-adorned by the conscientious Jap. Each new feature of the bungalow revealed to those of the party, who had not been there before, brought forth more expressions of delight.

Later on, when Walton cornered Bradshaw alone, he spoke to the miner with enthusiasm.

"Dan, that writing-room you've fixed up for me is a dream and no mistake. I almost had to laugh when you said that the writer friend for whom you had fixed it up wouldn't mind my using it. The trouble is that it is so complete as a lounging place and the view from its windows so attractive that I don't know how I ever could get down to writing in it."

"If you insist "on writing", returned Bradshaw, "go to it, John, but on this particular visit you don't have to do a tap of writing and"—he smiled at the newspaper-man—"if I know what I am talking about, I don't think you'll do much of it this time."

"Never happier than when writing or trying to do so", remarked Walton with a laugh.

"Or", said Bradshaw, "when in process of getting an inspiration from an inspiring source."

The young women made instant friends with Bradshaw's Airedale and with Don Quixote, which sagacious and pampered beast immediately took a great liking to them, following them about while the Airedale, too, waited constant attendance on them. The only grief that came to the burro was that it could not follow them

into the bungalow, and when they entered it, Don Quixote would remain before the veranda gazing with what looked like aggrieved surprise at the closed screen-door.

"Nip never has seemed so happy since he's been with me here as he does now", Bradshaw told his guests en route to the mine, later in the day. "He evidently thinks he never has had a proper chance before up here to show what he can do in the way of cooking, and this is his first attempt at general house-party entertaining, so he is putting forth every effort."

"He is a treasure", said Mary Norton.

"As a discoverer you are surely a vast success", laughingly said Margaret to Bradshaw.

At supper that evening, Margaret made an announcement.

"Mary and I have made some wonderful discoveries of our own", she said. "We have found two splendid riding horses and a most enticing looking buckboard in the stable, and we mean to avail ourselves of them if Mr. Williams has no objection."

"Any objections he might have are hereby overruled", stated Walton.

Norton regarded his sister with mock severity.

"Now, young lady", he said, "we'll have no gallavanting about on mountain roads and paths on horses, unless every one of the 'Safety First' provisos duly made and provided for are strictly observed."

"I appeal to Mr. Williams", said Mary. "Are we not to be permitted the use of those horses?"

"I think you would find them safe enough", Dan replied with a smile, "but then I quite agree with Mr. Norton that riding about on strange mountain roads and trails might not be the best practice unless some competent guide is along. I am going to have another of my

horses—one used for driving purposes—back tomorrow when Jackson, one of my men, returns from the lower camp, where he is bossing some new development work. And I think we might accommodate three more riding horses from town in our stables up here, so that when we go on our excursions, where no automobile possibly could go, we will be well provided."

So they talked and planned for visits to different adjacent localities—and altogether it was evident that the house party at "the shack" was in a happy frame of mind.

Norton and Bradshaw were smoking on the veranda that evening, pausing now and then in their conversation to listen to the sweet singing of Margaret Hanlon or the playing of Norton's sister, while Walton obtained that entertainment from a much nearer vantage place.

And then, a little later, when Walton was showing and explaining a book of photographic mountain views to Margaret Hanlon, Mary came out on the veranda just as the two men there had tossed away the carefully extinguished ends of their cigars.

"Truly a poetry-quoting night", she said, seating herself on the railing next to a wide pillar and gazing across the clearing and the trees down along the mountain side deep in shadows excepting where the moonlight picked out the higher points.

"If I want to write a few lines to Carter at the office in Butte", said Norton, "I'd better do so now for I'll be too busy tomorrow. So I'll ask you to excuse me", and he left.

Bradshaw seated himself on the rail a little distance from the girl.

"I am mighty glad, Miss Norton, that the place is not a disappointment to any of my guests", he said.

"But one thing about it is", she objected.

"May I ask what that is?" he queried.

"Its name", replied the girl. "I think it a fearful misnomer to call this delightful bungalow 'the shack'." She spoke with a girlish disdain that brought a laugh from him.

"What would you suggest?" he asked.

The girl looked away again over the clearing and the trees bathed in the soft moon glow. She was not one to descend to that manner of querulous, quibbling affection that some young women mistake for the finesse of conversational dealing with men, but was wholesomely direct.

"I think 'Mountain View' would be appropriate", she said, looking at him candidly.

"Then 'Mountain View' it is now and forever", he declared.

They went in to inform the others of the selection of a new name for the bungalow, which information evoked due acclaim.

Bradshaw and Walton were to use the cabin, Bradshaw's original home, which stood among the trees at one side of the clearing, as sleeping quarters.

When they had left the others, the two friends strolled slowly across the clearing to the shelter of the trees, seating themselves on a log in front of the cabin for a final smoke before turning in.

"It's like a chapter out of a novel", said Bradshaw. "Behold!—the ex-mucker become host of charming ladies and gallant gentlemen."

"Still the old hankering to oppose those who acquire—even when it's you, yourself, who is doing the acquiring", remarked the candid newspaperman.

"You're wrong, all wrong", and Bradshaw shook his

head. "I surely did not mean to convey that impression. No, my cynical friend, I was merely marveling at the wonder of it all."

"It's a tribute to your ability", said Walton.

"To my luck, you mean", remarked the other.

"And what, in the final analysis, is the good of luck without ability?" questioned Walton.

"You see plenty of luck without ability", Bradshaw stated.

"But it takes ability to enjoy luck", persisted the newspaperman and the miner, slapping him on the back, arose.

"Thus endeth the lesson", he said, dropping what was left of his cigar and grinding it with his heel. "I cannot argue successfully against you, my argumentative and clever friend."

Walton also carefully extinguished his cigar.

"I am glad of one thing anyhow", said the newspaperman, "and that is I know you have the ability to enjoy the luck I think you are going to have."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ARROW

Bradshaw and Walton were up with the dawn and breakfasted alone, for the others of the house party were not yet awake. Soon thereafter they were at the mine. Bradshaw prepared to go underground, and Walton accepted the delighted Paddy Skiff's invitation to see the "Missus".

"Sure", said Paddy. "Miss Nortin was glad to see me, bless her, an' she's promised to come over an' see our place too."

"Don't wait for me, Dan", said Walton to Bradshaw, as he was about to leave, "if you want to return to the house before I get back, I can return alone."

Bradshaw, returning to the bungalow an hour or so before noon, encountered Mary Norton and the Airedale and Don Quixote amid the trees at the edge of the clearing.

"Welcome!" she exclaimed when she saw him. "Do you know there is a wonderful spring of coldest, best water right here among the trees? We three have been enjoying it."

"One of the handiest and best things on the place", he agreed. "I think I would like some right now."

Followed by the Airedale and Don Quixote, they went the short distance to the spring.

This may be a prosaic way to treat so romantic a spring", said Bradshaw taking a tin cup from a stump

beside it, "but it's a convenient way", and he dipped the cup into the bubbling, crystal water and tendered it to the girl.

"Not any now, thank you", she said.

"Then permit me", and, taking off his hat, he put the cup to his lips and drank deeply.

"DeWitt has walked down to the lower camp", she informed him, as they made their way back towards the clearing, "and Margaret is showing Nip how to make pop-overs, so I came out here to entertain Don Quixote and Brave." She laid a hand on the head of the splendid Airedale which, when he could be, was always close beside her.

Bradshaw looked down at the dog.

"Brave has taken a great fancy to you, Miss Norton. He doesn't make friends readily."

"He knows I have a special liking for Airedales", she remarked, stroking the head of the faithful canine who turned adoring, soulful eyes up at her.

"Brave is a gentleman", said Bradshaw, "though that's a word so often misused that it is almost trite. But in the real meaning of the word, Brave is that. The more you know him, the more you will see that."

"I quite agree with you already about Brave", she hastened to say. "And Don Quixote", she turned slightly to reach back and pat the head of the burro, following along close back of them, "is an old dear."

"In his way, something of a gentleman also", said Bradshaw. "At any rate, he means well. Up in the mountains we are more prone to speak of a man as a man, if he is a real one, instead of as a gentleman. Somehow, the word 'gentleman' seems more appropriate amidst real refinement and gentler actions, and silk hats."

The girl, with her sidelong glance, took quick survey of the man walking beside her—muscularly built and bronzed, with close trimmed beard and manly, indeed, in his mountain costume of corduroy, blue flannel shirt with flowing tie, high laced boots and stiff-brimmed cowboy hat which he wore tilted down over his eyes.

"Is refinement a matter of attire and location?" she asked with a half smile.

The man laughed.

"Not at all. I expressed myself clumsily. I meant that we mountain people perhaps are more blunt. But we claim equal degree of sincerity. Sincerity is a quality which, like gold, is wherever you find it."

"And so is the quality of being a gentleman", said the girl

"That is true", he agreed. "I remember once knowing a pugilist—a fine looking, clean little chap he was. I was in college at the time and his training quarters were at a famous resort not so far away. Many of those in school, who cared for athletics, went over to see him train. He took a liking to me and confided in me, and while the others thought him reserved almost to the point of moroseness, I knew the reason for his reserve. It was only that he did more thinking than they accredited him with doing. One day I was in his dressing room just after he had finished a work-out. We were there alone and he looked very boyish sitting there on a bench in his big dressing-robe, his boxing gloves beside him. The light from the window behind him outlined his very pleasing profile perfectly. He was training for the bantam-weight championship fight at the time, but he spoke very little if at all of it. We had been talking of the college and affairs there, and he was more interested in its debating society than its athletics. He suddenly turned

to me and said something in a way I never will forget.

"'One time', he said, 'in Denver, after I had made a reputation as a boxer, some of the club boys, for a lark, I suppose, though I didn't think so then, got me to tog up in fashionable full dress and they took me with them to a society function, but instead of introducing me as Kid Jones'—that wasn't his name, by the way—'they presented me as Mr. Arthur Jones and'—I'll never forget the look in the Kid's dark eyes as he spoke—'they thought I was a gentleman.'"

There was a brief interval of silence.

"And so he was", went on Bradshaw. "It means having that fine, elusive, yet steel-like quality of propriety. The Kid had it and so have many men in towns and mountains and everywhere else. Brave has it."

The girl laughed in a low, soft tone.

"I think you are right", she said. "Once up on a mine road in Butte, a man, an utter stranger to me, stepped in and protected me from an annoyance that was not so serious as it was impudent. He was a man of real courage and if he had that fine, elusive and steel-like quality of propriety of which you have spoken, Mr. Williams, then truly he must have been a real gentleman."

The girl, looking ahead of her, did not see the keen glance the man directed at her, nor could she tell that beneath the bronze of his face, the blood burned hotly.

At the door of the bungalow, Nip informed Bradshaw of a telephone call, so Dan, excusing himself, left the girl.

At luncheon, Norton enthusiastically told of his walk down to the lower camp and of what he had seen there.

"Incidentally", he said to Bradshaw, "down along the main road, I caught a glimpse of three first class specimens of the genus Direct Actionist. They may look

worse than their bite, for I'll admit I did not get a very good look at them."

"Itinerants", said Bradshaw. "We very seldom see them up this way." But he did not tell his guests that Paddy Skiff had telephoned to him of a report brought to the foreman of three campers, not far from the main road near where the branch to the lower camp joined it, and that Jackson, who had gone down to look them over, had come back with the word that they were "Red Mike" Vignon and his henchmen, Wilkins and Snitch.

After lunch, Bradshaw left his guests to their own devises while he went to the mine and had a talk with Paddy Skiff.

"I don't want any trouble with Vignon and his two hoboes right now", Dan told Paddy. "Try to keep an eye on them if they come close to the mine or 'the shack', or if they hang around too close to the lower camp. As long as they stay where they are, or in that immediate neighborhood, we won't say anything for the present, but don't let them get near any of the workings. Later on, I'll see about them if they are still around here. Meantime, we won't take any chances. I know them too well to let them run wild."

Returning to the bungalow, he rejoined the others for the afternoon outing at a nearby mountain lake. Gayly the party, mounted on horseback, and with the efficient Nip coming along with the lunch in the buckboard, proceeded on its way.

The delight of the occasion was but typical of the pleasant events that followed each other at and near "Mountain View" in the following two days.

On the third morning after the outing at the lake, Bradshaw went to inspect the lower camp. He had proposed that, in the cooler period of the late afternoon,

they motor to town and about its environs, have supper at the excellent hotel there and return to "Mountain View" in the evening. So, with such understanding as to the afternoon and evening entertainment, Bradshaw had left for his visit to the lower camp. He might have proceeded there on horseback, along part of the main highway to town and then a branch road, but, as he said to Norton, he had decided to go on foot over a mountain trail that shortened the distance from "Mountain View" to the lower camp by more than a mile and also afforded a form of exercise that Dan liked.

Just before the lunch hour, Norton settled himself down to reading in the living-room.

Margaret Hanlon busied herself with a letter at the library table, while Walton went to the writing-den.

Mary, calling Brave, determined to achieve the glory of making the climb to the top of the ridge, thinking of the surprise her exploit would occasion the others.

Her way was along a path through the dense woods that for some distance paralleled the main highway and then swung away at almost right angles towards the ridge.

Brave was darting into the brush here and there, sometimes running along the path ahead of her and again pacing sedately at her side. All at once, he thrust forward his muzzle and pricked up his ears, the while whining slightly.

Some one was coming along the pathway and as yet screened from the girl's sight. When she came to the next wide turn, she saw a man approaching. He would have seen her had he been looking straight along the path, but he was far more intent on peering at the bushes at the side of the path as he came.

She stopped short in surprise as she recognized

Tharny. Whatever was he doing here? Why had he come? Was it because he could not remain away from—and she was smiling a little to herself even before she had completed the thought.

Then she was on the very point of hailing him when the bushes near him parted and a burly figure stepped out to accost Tharny. It was Vignon.

Instinctively she stepped back. She quieted Brave with a pat on his head and he licked her hand, but he continued quivering as though with suppressed excitement.

The two men were coming along now, and without realizing her action, she stepped off the path, Brave at her heels and the thick bushes concealed them. But she heard their voices and presently could distinguish their words. When nearly opposite her, they stopped and she heard Tharny saying, "I had a good hunch this would be the time to come out again to see you. But you want to be sure you know—your dope the last two times was all wrong."

"It's all right this time—we've got the lovely chance to fix this guy so's his lady-love won't think he's such a much."

"Cut it out", snapped Tharny. "Show me some action. You've got a chance to show I made no mistake in keeping you on the payroll."

"Payroll!" snorted Vignon. "A loan now an' then, after that hundred a month proposition went bump, ain't exactly bein' on any payroll."

"Well, those loans helped, especially after your League idea blew up."

"Anyhow", came Vignon's retort, "I raised some hell before it went bump."

"Get down to business", snapped the other. "There's

another hundred in this thing, you know, if you go through with it."

"Oh I'm goin' through", the other assured him. "I got a little axe to grind aroun' this place myself—one of the bunch roun' here threatened to have us run off."

"What's the layout?" asked Tharny.

"Me an' Wilkins an' Snitch jumps him when he's comin' along the road from his lower camp. He gen'rally walks it—so Wilkins found out from a friend of his down there. Then we beats him up good. What kind of a showing can he make when he gets back to his house all beat up? Why the girl'll think he's nothin' but a rough-neck—see? Just a rough-house scrapper—that's all."

"Where'd you get that idea about the girl part of it?" demanded Tharny angrily.

Vignon laughed. "Snitch is no fool. He's seen you out with her in Butte, an' up here it looks as if Williams is the whole thing. I don't need no brick house to fall on me. Of course if you want to get hunk with him for some other reason, that's all right with me too, but I'll bet a cookie if he loses out with her you won't weep."

"Never mind, Vignon—that part's all right. You go through with your end of it." Tharny spoke tensely. "See that he gets all that's coming to him. Don't murder him—just beat him to a finish. Where are your pals?"

"I planted 'em down by the road—they didn't need to know ev'rything that's between us. That's why I told you to come up along this way."

"Good enough. I'll go there and watch the fun from the brush if it comes off soon enough. My horse is tied in the woods a mile from the lower camp. I'll get back to town after the show is over, if there's a performance in reasonable time today, and then you come in and see me—back room of the same saloon as before."

"Nix—gimme the hundred now", Vignon demanded.
"I might want to make a speedy getaway."

There was a little more talk on that subject, but the girl did not remain for it. She was making a detour through the brush to regain the pathway and once on it, she sped as fast as she could towards the bungalow. Her thought was to have her brother telephone to the lower camp and warn Dan. Yet, and a fear rose in her heart, if Dan already had left the lower camp there would be delay in telephoning there to have someone go after him, and even then he might take the warning lightly and go on to investigate. Her woman's nature rebelled against the idea of his even risking the danger.

She was approaching the bungalow from the rear, and as she came opposite the stable, she saw Dan's favorite driving horse he had named The Arrow, harnessed to the light buckboard. John, the stableman, had just finished harnessing up The Arrow and had gone to the kitchen to ask Nip what he wanted brought from town.

The moment the girl saw The Arrow, a new plan flashed through her mind. She quickly untied the horse and, climbing into the rig, took the lines.

The Arrow was just swinging into the roadway when John came to the stable and he ran forward towards the road, great annoyance plainly depicted on his face. However, when he saw who was driving, he stopped and a smile succeeded his deep frown.

"She can handle him—she sure knows how to drive and The Arrow likes her", he said to himself. "I suppose she thinks that's a fine joke on me to go an' take him for a minute."

Indeed, the stableman was very much disposed toward this wonderfully pleasant young woman. Much to

his gratification and Dan's surprise, she had, soon after her arrival, made ready friends with the spirited, glossy, arch-necked Arrow who seemed in no more fear of her than she of him, and he readily had manifested that from her hand offerings of sugar were most delectable.

The buckboard was a trig little vehicle, and with Mary Norton in it, was a very inconsiderable load for such a powerful animal as The Arrow. But that spirited horse well knew, by reason of that peculiar nerve-vibration which flashes along the reins from driver to equine brain, that a capable person was in charge.

While Mary Norton was turning The Arrow into the main road from the roadway connecting "Mountain View" and the mine, Bradshaw, Paddy Skiff and Jackson were fairly well along from the lower camp, they having decided to come via the roadway.

The main road was a clever piece of engineering and construction work. It had no precipitous grades, but followed down along the mountain side at a gradual incline, sometimes bordered on one side by a high, cliff-like side of hill and on the other by a steep, tree-studded slope. Then it ran fairly level, by reason of cuts and fills, across a stretch of bulging mountain side. Almost for its length to the foot of the mountain, the road was edged with trees.

Coming down the more inclined parts of the road, Mary kept the reins taut, aiding The Arrow to keep his footing, but seeking to make the best time she could. She was trembling with excitement for she must reach Bradshaw before he came to where he was to be waylaid.

Reaching the last of the almost level stretches, that went between arching trees and curved at its end to that length of road along which Dan and his two companions were coming, The Arrow broke into a faster gait now and

again tossing his arched neck and shaking his head in the exuberance of his spirit.

From the side of the road where the trees and bushes grew thickest, there peered the evil face of Vignon, and the instant that the startled girl beheld it, The Arrow, noting the movement in the underbrush, shied. Then as Vignon drew back, letting the parted bushes snap together, the frightened horse sprang forward, taking the bit in his teeth.

The girl braced herself and pulled back on the reins with all her unavailing strength, talking to The Arrow in a low, firm voice in an effort to calm him. But the animal plunged on, the light buckboard bounding from side to side. One of the lines parted near the bit and the maddened horse, free from all restraint, dashed headlong on towards where Bradshaw, who had, at sight of the oncoming rig, run ahead of his companions, was half crouching for a spring on the outer rim of the road. Paddy and Jackson had quickly lined up side by side with outstretched arms as if to form a barrier across the road, at the same time crying out, "Whoa! whoa!"

In the brief moments that passed, before the horse reached him, Bradshaw saw the girl half rise, as if with the idea of trying to climb over the back of the buckboard and drop to the ground, but the next lunge of the vehicle threw her roughly forward, so that to save herself she had to crouch at the bottom of the rig. Bradshaw's purpose was to make the horse take the inner side of the road, which was against a sharp rise, and thus away from the danger of toppling over the outer edge down the steep declivity below the point where he waited, and, in the instant that he was drawing himself even closer together to hurl himself at the bridle, he saw the dangling bit of rein on the side nearest him.

Through his keenly active brain flashed the realization that he could not hope to check the horse as he had planned. But as the wildly galloping animal swerved from him to the inner side of the road, Bradshaw whirled and shot forward his right arm so that the tips of his fingers barely closed over the top of the slender iron rail at the back of the buckboard. It was a precarious enough hold, but in desperation he made it do, and half-dragged, half-running, he managed to close a full grip around the bar. All that he was doing was immeasurably quicker than could be the telling of it, for one great purpose was electrifying him—to be up there in the buckboard with the girl—to shield her, to give her all there was of his man strength.

With his left hand now gripping the slender, iron rod, he drew himself up so that he could grasp with his right hand two of the little bars that held up the back of the buckboard's seat. Quickly he was crouching beside the girl and leaning forward to get the other rein, but it was just beyond his reach. He made as if to climb over the dash-board to the back of the horse, but at the next turn The Arrow left the road where nearly level ground abutted it, ending at the embankment of a cut through which ran the aerial tramway.

Another moment and Bradshaw was crouching beside the girl again, his left arm holding her close to him as he drew from the holster under his coat a blunt, powerful automatic revolver, and, pointing it straight before him, only waited until the next second when the arched neck of the horse came rearing into view and then he fired. Again he fired and yet a third time, as The Arrow, sorely stricken, wavered and reeled, when Bradshaw threw the weapon from him and clasping the girl in both his arms held her tightly. He caught only a fleeting

glimpse of The Arrow dropping forward dying—and then darkness engulfed him as the buckboard splintered atop horse and tangled harness.

When he opened his eyes, Bradshaw was at one side of the wreckage and the girl, unhurt, was kneeling beside him, wiping the grime from his face. He tried smiling up at her, a rather painful process for his somewhat bruised face.

At any rate, he asked, "Are you all right, Mary?" and directly lost sight of her face as blackness again swept over him.

Paddy and Jackson came running up.

Dan was fully restored to consciousness by the time he had been taken to the lower camp, and when Norton, Walton and Margaret arrived as quickly as they could be summoned, he was standing up declaring repeatedly that he only had sustained some bruises and a few scratches.

Norton took his sister in his arms crushing her to him, and when he let her go there were tears in his eyes. From her brother's arms she went to those of Margaret Hanlon, and Norton grasped Bradshaw's hand and looked at him in a way that revealed to the latter the depth of the brother's feelings more than could words.

That evening, when Bradshaw and his guests were gathered in the big, cheerful living room of Mountain View, Dan was saying, "And now, ladies and gentlemen, let us be cheerfully thankful—thankful and cheerful."

His tone and manner did much to dispel the gloom that the shock had occasioned and the fear that gripped their hearts whenever thought came of the possibilities that might have ensued.

When they would have praised him, Bradshaw sought to evade any appearance of heroism by declaring that

had he not been in the way, The Arrow would have kept to the road and, doubtless, quickly would have come to his senses.

These were not morbid people, so they did not dwell to marked extent on the details of the accident.

It is often the manner of men and women who come from fighting, daring and doing stock to conceal, when they deem it needful, the deepest of emotions beneath a surface of quiet, even cheerfulness—always steadiness. They usually are the sort whose ancestors smiled when death stared them in the face and so helped inculcate the theory that a miss is as good as a mile.

The members of the "Mountain View" house-party retired early that evening and, in the seclusion of the cabin, Walton again spoke to Bradshaw of the runaway.

"Dan, Lad", said the newspaperman, as he sat beside Bradshaw on the edge of a bunk and put his arm across his friend's shoulders, "I won't speak words of praise to you. You know what I think—what we all think of your brave action. You saved a wonderful girl—I don't need to tell you that. You did a man's part—you proved yourself the man you always have been and are. You showed remarkable presence of mind."

"Thanks, Old Man", said Bradshaw quietly, and that was all.

The next morning when Dan saw Paddy Skiff at the mine office he spoke a few words to him.

"Sure an' it's all bin tended to", the foreman assured him, and by that he meant that the body of The Arrow had been buried and the wreckage of the buckboard and harness burned.

During Dan's absence from the bungalow, Norton conferred with the girls and Walton.

"Mr. Williams not only has placed Mary and me

under a great obligation to him", Norton said, "but he has tried to make us all happy while here as his guests. Now during these last couple of days of our stay here, let us continue to be cheerful."

And to that, the others heartily agreed.

That evening, when Dan was coming across the clearing from the cabin, Mary intercepted him.

"I've been wanting an opportunity to see you alone", she informed him. "The Arrow ran away because he was frightened. A man in the bushes—a most villainous man—"

He gently interrupted her.

"I can imagine who he was, Miss Norton—he is a thorough rascal, a real red-anarchist and has not the slightest love for me. In fact, I know he has made threats, but they are vaporings and won't materialize. I've known for several days that he's been loitering around here. Do not give yourself the slightest uneasiness about him for we are keeping close track of him and his two companions. They are not going to be around here much longer. Please, I beg of you, do not give yourself the least concern about him. We are prepared to handle him and the other two at any time and we are on our guard all the time. In fact Paddy Skiff, Jackson and myself were scouting along the road just to get sight of them."

The girl said no more and she was thankful he had told her that. To her it seemed that anything she now might tell him of what had caused her to drive The Arrow would appear utterly and cheaply melodramatic. He had thought that she had merely meant to come for him with The Arrow so that he might ride to the bungalow, and she would not disillusion him.

Only once again did Mary speak to Bradshaw of the

runaway and the rescue. That was on the final evening of the house party's visit, when she and Dan were out on the veranda, the moonlight casting its spell over the mountain scenery.

"Mr. Williams", she said, "I want you to know that—that what you did at the time of the runaway always will be remembered by me."

For a moment or two neither of them spoke and then Dan said, "I'm sure, Miss Norton, that The Arrow didn't really mean to do it. He wasn't a vicious animal."

There came to him a fleeting memory of a glossy brown, arched neck pierced by the powerful bullets of an automatic revolver. And he added, "But he had to pay the price of his folly."

Suddenly Bradshaw turned to the girl.

"Had it been my life for yours I would gladly have given it", he added. "I—"

Then Norton, Margaret and Walton came out on the veranda.

Not again did Bradshaw have occasion to speak to the girl alone, nor, in fact, did he seek it. But he said to her as he bade farewell to his departing guests at the depot in town, "Next week I will be in Butte and I hope to see you."

"I'll expect you then", she said smilingly.

To Margaret Hanlon, who had announced that she was going to leave Butte almost immediately upon her arrival there, to join her mother at San Francisco for a journey to Honolulu, he remarked, "You mustn't forget your friends in Montana, Miss Hanlon, when you are far away."

"I never will forget them", she declared, and then more impulsively, "and I'm going to say again, Mr. Williams, that I never will forget my delightful visit at

'Mountain View', nor your brave act—what a debt of gratitude we all owe you!"

In that moment, Bradshaw had a glimpse of the girl as she always had been meant to be—free from even slightest affectation and trace of hauteur, which she had acquired in the course of her cosmopolitan career.

Norton again exacted a promise from Dan that he soon would come to Butte, and with Walton, Bradshaw merely shook hands, both gripping tightly.

The departing visitors were on the back platform of the train as it began to draw away from the depot, Mary on the side nearest where Dan was standing. He swung up on the car step for an instant and she held out her hand to him for a final clasp.

Then he stood watching the train, waving as his friends waved to him, until they had gone from his sight.

En route to the mine, he roused himself from his thoughts as he came to the place where The Arrow had plunged from the road towards the embankment and, stopping his automobile there, he got out and walked over to where the horse had gone down.

"Strange", he said to himself as his eyes searched the ground, "that neither Paddy nor Jackson could find where I threw my automatic. I should have bought another one before coming home today—but I'll get a new one tomorrow."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE FIGHT IN THE GLEN

Bradshaw went to town next day and bought a new automatic revolver, for though he had ample store of firearms, he liked the kind he could wear in his flat holster under his left arm. He also attended to other business, and before he left for his return trip to the mine, he went to a telephone booth and got into communication with Paddy Skiff with whom he held a conversation of some minutes duration.

At the point where the main road was joined by the roadway from the lower camp, a solitary horseman awaited Bradshaw who, when he came close enough, held up his hand as a signal that he recognized Paddy Skiff.

"All properly fixed?" asked Bradshaw as he stopped his automobile near Paddy and got out.

By way of reply, Paddy drew back the left side of his coat for an instant showing the handle of his revolver, and the next moment staring at Bradshaw with lower jaw slightly sagging in surprise.

"Yer whiskers—yer beard—ye've shaved it off!" he exclaimed. "Yer sure enough Dan Bradshaw again!"

"That I am", said Dan. "I thought it was time to get back to the Bradshaw part of the name for keeps."

"An' then that's what ye meant when ye sed 'Red Mike' an' his two shpalpeens would know ye alright?"

"Exactly. I don't want them to have the slightest

doubt about it. Just one thing more—if you feel the least hesitancy, Paddy, about what I told you over the telephone, say so and I'll understand." And when Paddy would have spoken, Bradshaw quickly added, "I know perfectly that it is not a question of loyalty or bravery, Paddy Skiff, but you must remember too that there is a 'Missus' now and"—

"An' I'm proud to say" Paddy broke in, drawing himself up—"that the Missus Pathrick Skiff would disown me if she thought fer a moment I would back out of this proposition."

That point having been definitely settled, Bradshaw turned his attention to the business at hand.

"Where is the place?" he asked.

"Not far from the main road; over in a gully."

Paddy dismounted and tied his horse to a tree screened by a clump of bushes.

With Paddy as guide, the men made their way through the heavy timber and finally to a flat-bottomed gully well surrounded with trees and underbrush and carpeted with springy turf.

At a small camp-fire near the center of the hollow, half-reclined three figures.

Bradshaw and Paddy stepped into the gully and covered the three men at the fire with their revolvers held slightly extended just above the hip.

"Throw up your hands!" Bradshaw ordered sharply as the three sprang to their feet.

Two of the men, Wilkins and Snitch, elevated their hands as far as they could reach, but Vignon, with a snarl that drew back his lips from his teeth as would an animal, made as if to sweep back his coat.

"Put 'em up, Vignon—no fooling!" ordered Bradshaw in a tone that was coolly menacing, and reluctantly

the other raised his big, gnarled hands to the height of his broad, thick shoulders.

"Bradshaw!" he sneered, "I thought it was you when I seen Paddy Skiff an' Jackson an' a few of yer other guys 'roun' here—I thought so."

"We won't discuss your thoughts on the subject", said Bradshaw briskly. "Paddy, search those other fellows."

And as Paddy Skiff took from each of the other two a cheap revolver of bulldog pattern, Bradshaw relieved Vignon of an automatic.

Bradshaw and Paddy stepped back.

"Keep them covered until I dispose of these guns", said Dan to Paddy, and Bradshaw placed his own weapon back in its place. He took the two bulldog revolvers which Paddy handed him, emptied out their bullets and, tossing them on the ground, turned his attention to the automatic he had taken from Vignon.

"So you found my gun", he remarked to "Red Mike". He slipped it into his pocket. "Thanks for finding it." Then he addressed the trio of Direct Actionists. "You fellows can put your hands down now", which they proceeded to do, Paddy still keeping his weapon in position for quick use if need be. "Now you fellows listen to me", Bradshaw continued. "You have been snooping around this place entirely too long." He spoke tensely and he fixed Vignon with eyes that were steady and fearless beneath lowered brows. "I know your game wherever you go. You've had just about long enough to get the lay of the land around here and your next move would be mischief. Your request of Paddy Skiff for work and your applying down at the lower camp, were stalls—just bluffs. You don't want work anywhere. I know what you want. Some of the men in this camp, who know you, have complained about your being around here. If

you were permitted to hang around here they might take a notion to get busy and see that you didn't."

Vignon was still scowling at him.

"You mean they think they'd run us out, hey? Well—we ain't the runnin' out kind—see?"

But Bradshaw went on as if he had not heard him.

"The purpose of this little meeting is this—You fellows are going away from here. That's a personal proposition with me. As far as you're concerned, Vignon, I guess your Shanghai-ing me was a real benefit after all, and so I'll let that part of it go. But you and these two fellows with you can't stay around as close to my place as this."

Wilkins and Snitch kept glancing at Vignon, evidently preferring to let him be the spokesman for them.

"Very kind of you", sneered Vignon, "to tell us what we kin an' can't do, Mister Bradshaw", emphasizing the "Mister" sarcastically. "When you was hot-footin' 'round Carty's you wasn' such a high-flier, but now"—

Bradshaw curtly interrupted him.

"I don't want your talk. I'm trying to give you the best of it by handling your case myself instead of letting the men at the mine take it up and give you some real rough treatment. I'll go this far—I'll see that you're not molested and that you are given a ride down to the depot in town. I'll buy each of you a ticket to Butte or Spokane and give you each twenty-five dollars for expenses on the way."

These words brought a half-smile to Snitch's face as if the plan appealed to him. But Wilkins, taking his cue from Vignon, continued his surly look.

As for Vignon, he thrust forward his evil face and fairly spat out his words.

"Keep yer damn money", he snarled. "You ain't man

'nough to run me off. You never was man 'nough to do anythin' with me. You sucked 'round bosses in Butte. You thought you was somethin' in the League but you wasn'. You hung 'round Klemner's"—

But he paused in his tirade when he saw Bradshaw throw off his coat and hat and unbuckle his holster and hand it to Paddy Skiff.

"Now Mr. 'Red Mike' Vignon", Dan said, rolling up the sleeves of his blue flannel shirt, "you've reached the end of your rope." He addressed his next words to Paddy, but did not take his eyes off Vignon. "Paddy, see that there's no interference from those two bums"—Snitch smiled broadly at that and was evidently pleased at the prospect of some excitement, while Wilkins scowled the more—"and Mister 'Red Mike', Direct Actionist Dynamiter Vignon"—he seemed to want to sting Vignon with his words—"and I'll get busy." He took a step forward towards Vignon. "I call your bluff—or I'll slap your face and kick you out of here."

Vignon swore, threw his hat on the ground and followed it with his coat and holster.

Paddy motioned to Wilkins and Snitch to move back and he, himself, did likewise, leaving Bradshaw and Vignon facing each other for battle.

Response to the battle call is more or less inherent in all human beings. And they all fight—each and every one of them when the fight response comes crashing through veneer of patience, training and reasoning restraint. It is said that even the self-abasing worm will turn to show its mite of fighting valor at a certain point.

And whereas the cave-man might have sprung to unreasoning, maddened fighting at merely slight provocation, his male descendants manifest much of that sort of disregard for consequences when once they have been

sufficiently aroused and the fighting response comes.

Vignon, illiterate, uncouth, with cave-man propensity to hate and fight very near the surface, was the kind to plunge into battle with blind, ferocious, unreasoning anger.

Bradshaw, educated, trained, and with the cave-man inclination to hate and fight very much deeper from the surface, was the kind to plunge into battle with keen, ferocious but reasoning anger.

The fight of these two men in the tree-shaded, brush-guarded, flat-bottomed gully was one of definite purpose. No desire here to score technical points by reason of boxing art, but to land jarring, hurtful, crushing blows—to punish, disable.

A man like Vignon might have been escorted away from the place at the point of guns. He might have been imprisoned. He even might have been lashed at a whipping-post. And still his fighting spirit would not have been broken—he still would have returned brazen, defiant and as dangerous as ever to the very place from which he had been driven. But brutish though he was, defiant and dangerous, he was instinctively cognizant of that unwritten code, which has it that a man beaten in a fair, stand-up fist fight is in a way duty bound, though his spirit still may remain unbroken, his fighting ability still good and his status as a man and fighter still unimpaired, to accede to the wish of the man who has defeated him with regard to whatever question is at issue.

So Vignon recognized, as did the others there, that if Bradshaw was his conqueror, he would have to do as Bradshaw had said he must—and go. Thus he would obey a code that is one of those vague, illogical and yet

powerful laws of man-nature, smacking, perhaps, of a certain kind of chivalry.

As for Bradshaw—he was that sort of man who does not want any other to face a danger in his behalf that he, himself, would be unwilling to confront. His peculiar advantage over his antagonist was that finer courage which Vignon did not possess and which really is more than physical prowess.

Bradshaw, in an easy yet sufficiently tense boxer's pose, was ready with right and left fists.

Vignon stood more solidly planted and evidently intending to utilize ponderous, crushing swings.

A trim built athlete, who once won reputation as a boxer, declared that his method of defeating a larger, stronger and slower opponent, was to make him miss, the theory being that the larger man would wear himself out through his own exertions.

Bradshaw followed a similar method for an interval. Suddenly he feinted at Vignon's face and avoided a heavy right-arm swing by a turn of his head, but Vignon executed a trick for which Bradshaw might well have been prepared had he not been too intent on countering. Vignon crashed his right fist with a back-hand swing against Bradshaw's head that would have ended the fight had it landed a trifle lower. Bradshaw stepped back, shaking his head to clear it and then returned to the combat. Dan jabbed, countered and used uppercut tactics with all the scientific precision he could command. Vignon tried to make effective all his rough-and-tumble methods in which he was well versed and which had made him a feared saloon-fighter in Butte.

And as surely as the one man was superior in mentality, in fine courage and determination to the other, so surely did Bradshaw begin to inflict grueling punish-

ment on the desperate Vignon. The blows he landed were not wide-swung, but were delivered with a snap that cut and bruised. The very fact that Vignon began glancing to one side and the other as if almost at bay and seeking outside help he knew not from where, was an indication to Dan that the fight was coming to an end. Bradshaw, eager to terminate the battle, repeatedly battered Vignon's jaw, trying to connect with that certain point that is vulnerable even to the impact of a light fist. Vignon tried to clinch Bradshaw around the neck, but Dan avoided him. Then the miner made as if to go into a clinch with Vignon and, as the latter raised his arms again, Bradshaw stepped forward with his right foot simultaneously sending in his right fist just below Vignon's left shoulder—just enough of a blow to send the other slightly off his balance, that being Bradshaw's purpose in using this shift. In the instant when Vignon was recovering his equilibrium, Bradshaw, with a forceful swing of his body, whipped over his almost fully extended left arm, and his left fist landed solidly on the very point of Vignon's jaw which jarred the heavy man from head to foot, sending a paralysis along the nerves to his brain and toppling him over.

Vignon was not unconscious and, beyond a slight stiffness of the lower jar, was himself again physically in a moment or two after striking the ground, but he did not rise.

"Get up, Vignon", commanded Bradshaw breathing deeply in what he thought was only to be an interval of rest.

Vignon did not get up even then, but raised himself slowly on an elbow.

"Well—what d'ya want?" he growled sullenly. It was his admission of defeat.

Wilkins scowled as before, but Snitch laughed.

"Hell—the yellah's showin' in him", Snitch remarked. Then with much disgust, "I taut dare wuz yellah in him." And to Bradshaw, "I got tuh give it tuh yuh agin—yer a all right guy. Dat big stiff", pointing to Vignon, "he ain't."

Bradshaw laughed shortly and turned to Paddy Skiff who had put away his revolver.

"Well—I guess that's all", said Dan. Then to Vignon, "You don't have to lie there for the rest of the day."

Vignon got up slowly, picked up his hat, coat and holster and darted a malignant look at Snitch.

"Do we get our guns back?" asked Wilkins.

"Not so as you can notice it", Bradshaw curtly informed him, picking up his hat and coat.

"Say—let me have mine", requested Snitch. "I'm tru wid dat big stiff"—indicating Vignon with a contemptuous jerk of his thumb while 'Red Mike' glowered at him—"an' I wan' tuh beat it fer th' railroad alone an' not take no chansis wid him an' dis fellah", indicating Wilkins.

"Give him his gun, Paddy", said Bradshaw.

Paddy took one of the bulldog revolvers from the ground and gave it to Snitch.

"Tanks", said Snitch pocketing the weapon. "I feel better now."

"Just a minute", and Bradshaw took a wallet from the inside pocket of his coat and extracted two bills from it, holding the currency out to Snitch. "Take these, and I would suggest that you leave now."

Snitch grinned and took the money.

"I'll blow fer town—I feel bettern' ever", and soon he was lost to sight among the trees.

Some hours later he did not feel so well.

Vignon and Wilkins came up with him at a lonely water tank where he was waiting the coming of a Butte bound freight train and they despoiled him of the bulldog revolver and his money, leaving him beaten and bruised behind the water tank when they swung aboard the freight train that stopped there half an hour later.

"Here you", said Vignon to Wilkins as they crouched in an empty cattle car, 'put this in yer shoe", and he handed him one of the bills. "I'll keep the other one an' this gat"—he took the squat, bulldog revolver partly from a side pocket of his coat and let it drop back in again—"I'll keep fer fuchure ref'rence."

CHAPTER XXIX

DREAMS AND THE GIRL

On the very first night of their return home, Mary Norton told her brother of the incidents that had led up to the affair of The Arrow.

He took her in his arms.

"Why you plucky little thing!" he exclaimed over and over again. "And to think Tharny—of all men, Tharny! It's amazing—simply amazing! Well, that settles Mr. Tharny!"

And the next evening when Tharny, perfectly groomed, at his best in manner, and carrying a box of roses, rang the doorbell of the Norton home, he was shown into the library where Norton awaited him.

From that interview, Tharny went an astonished and a bitterly enraged man. Never again would he see the interior of the Norton home.

* * * * *

When Dan Bradshaw stood in Walton's office one morning, about two weeks later, there was nothing other than the healthful and becoming bronze of his face to indicate that he had been spending so many of his days in the open among the mountains, for now, in place of his mountain costume, he was trim in his well-fitting suit of gray which, so the newspaperman remarked as he took in Dan from his smart shoes to his neat blue tie, not omitting notice of the gray Fedora hat he held in his

hand together with his gray kid-gloves, made him a splendid advertisement for whoever his tailor might be.

"So I can't prevail on you to linger here a few moments more?" asked Walton. "Supposing then that you come back in an hour and we have lunch together."

"Agreed. Meantime I'll go and attend to that business I have on hand."

The business to which Bradshaw referred took him to a telephone booth from which he put in a call for the Norton residence.

To the maid who answered, Dan stated he would like to speak to Miss Norton, requesting the maid to say that a friend from the mountains was at the telephone. As the maid carried his message to Mary Norton, the heart of this man, who had met and overcome some mighty strenuous obstacles and who even with scarcely a qualm had fought a man to a finish in a mountain gully, accelerated its pace, especially when, quite unexpectedly, a clear voice of a quality that always stirred him deeply, came to him.

"And so you have taken sufficient time to leave your mountains", she said, after they had exchanged greetings.

"I had meant to be here some time ago", he declared, "but there were things that conspired to detain me. But tell me, what is far more important than anything else—How are you?"

"Just splendid. And you?"

"As well as ever. And your brother?"

"His usual good self. DeWitt is in Anaconda today, but I think he will be back on the night train. When am I going to see you?"

"That is what I called up to find out. Can it be this afternoon?"

"At two."

"At two, then."

When they had ended their telephonic conversation, Dan first went to a florist's from where, presently, was sent to the Norton home a box of Mary's favorite pink roses and violets, after which he attended to other matters, and then proceeded to the newspaper office.

Dan and Walton lunched and, for a time thereafter, the miner visited with his friend in the latter's sanctum.

"Never get tired of telling you how good you look to me as your former self", Walton said, eyeing the other closely and with that look of fraternal regard which showed his feeling for Bradshaw. "By the way—how will the mining world take the acquisition of the M. N., by Daniel Bradshaw?"

"The mining world, as you call it, if it thinks of it at all, will not know whether Robinson Crusoe sold the mine to Daniel Bradshaw, or if said Bradshaw seized the mine a long time ago, or if Williams sold out, or what. The boys at the mine, if they noticed it at all, didn't care whether I had a beard or not, and as for the grievance committee, consisting of three of the miners Jackson originally brought to the place with him—they got on to the fact some weeks ago that Williams and Bradshaw were one and the same, and they didn't even comment on it. They seemed to think the use of the name of Williams was merely a matter of mine business convenience, just as some firms use the names of persons no longer connected with those enterprises in any way."

"That's right", said Walton. "Many persons think there is a Van Stanley of the so-called Van Stanley interests when, as a matter of fact, that name always is signed per somebody else, for the Van Stanley of that big concern is Mr. Walter Blumenschein." He looked keenly at

Bradshaw. "Anyhow, there is no one to whom you need make the slightest apology about it."

Dan smiled at him.

"Explanation, perhaps, but apology—never!" He arose from the comfortable leather office chair and picked up his hat and gloves. "Until we meet again", he said with a slight bow to Walton who was leaning back in his swivel chair looking at him.

But astute as was the newspaperman, he did not begin to guess that beneath the seeming self-possession of this erect and most pleasing appearing man before him, there was a tumult of emotion actuating a strongly pumping heart.

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The deep-toned chime of the Grandfather's clock in the reception hall of the Norton home was indicating the hour of two o'clock when Bradshaw rang the door-bell.

Presently he was standing looking out of a window of the drawing-room, while the maid went to inform Mary of his arrival. At the moment of entering the room he had noted that the flowers he had sent her were arranged in several vases.

Came the sound of a door closing and the light step of a woman. He turned to behold her, a vision of loveliness in a cool, pink linen dress, girlishly made as befitted her, and at the waist some of his violets. Her hair was parted slightly at one side and waved back, as he best liked it, to a loose and gracefully arranged knot.

She came forward with hand extended to welcome him, as he, too, stepped to meet her, when she caught full view of his face and paused, uncertain and surprised. Her hand fell to her side.

"Why—I—I—" she began and hesitated.
His direct look met hers.

"You are not mistaken", he said quietly, and though she knew the tone of his voice as that of the mountain man, she studied him intently and waited for him to continue.

"Miss Norton, I am D. Williams and I am Dan Bradshaw."

"Yes, I see", she said with the admirable self-control characteristic of her, "that you are Dan—Mr. Bradshaw."

It was as if she were pondering for a fleeting moment why she had not seen that before, but then she only had met Dan Bradshaw, as the man of that name, three times, and at each of those times for a brief period. She remembered Dan Bradshaw best as she had seen him up on the mine road above Carty's two years before, and recognize him now she most certainly did.

"Are you sorry?" he asked gently.

The pink rose hue of her cheeks deepened, and it might have been that the girl had an undefined feeling of gladness in knowing that the man of the mine road and the man of the mountains were one and the same.

"It is all so—so—" she began.

"I know", he said. "It is melodramatic and bewildering, but it had to be told."

"Yes, that is true", she said, and while there still was a questioning look in her eyes, on her lips was a faint trace of smile, more a wistfulness not without pathetic appeal, with which the girl conveyed to him the thought that he had wounded her pride deeply, perhaps not so much because of the subterfuge he had thought necessary in gaining her friendship by a change of name, as by failing to acknowledge her womanly discrimination and ability to judge his real merit.

"I want to tell you why it had to be done", he went

on, holding her closely attentive by the quiet power in his tone and his direct look.

She placed a hand lightly at her throat.

"Was it necessary—to—not to have told me before?" she asked, looking at him bravely. "I think I would have understood, and I would have been—truthworthy."

"You hurt me when you say that", he declared. "I want to tell you why, if I can. I don't just know how to say it—I am fearfully bunglesome. Won't you sit down and let me tell you?"

"I will", she answered with a little nod, and seated herself on a divan so that he continued facing her, his hand resting on the back of the chair beside him.

"You don't want me to wade through a lot of story, I know", he said, speaking rather quickly and as intently as before. "You doubtless guessed what I was when—you first saw me, and there was nothing dishonorable about me then—I can assure you of that. I was a hard working mucker in a mine. I needed work and I needed opportunity for other things too—I would like to tell you all about them sometime—I know you would understand. And I would like to tell you all about my boyhood in California and of my people"—he held his head up proudly—"they were of the best. I would like to tell you of my Uncle Sim and Aunt Ruth, I call them, though they are not related to me—who brought me up and sent me to college; of my years after that—hard working and cheerless days on a cattle boat and in other hard places, and of my coming to Butte to work—onward and upward. And I can't tell you—it would be too long and you wouldn't want to hear now of my—my career here and what came of it. But I will tell you how I came to leave Butte—because I was hit on the head and thrown

into a box car and run out—just as if I were—well, I had just about struck the bottom, I guess."

He, seemingly, had no desire to spare himself.

"Then I came to where I was near the mountains—my mountains, I call them now. I think you know something of what has happened since then. I wanted to fight my way up with a fair chance, unhampered by any possible obstacles, and so I became D. Williams—the Williams part is my middle name—and always with the intention of telling you all about it if the time ever came when I could do so. And the time has come. How could I have come to know you as I have, had I gone on as Dan Bradshaw? Don't you see? Surely you do. Your brother would never have permitted it. I know men—they honor other men who make good, and real men like your brother overlook past mistakes too—but even he, with all his broad-mindedness, would have fought shy of me, I think, at least to the extent of not letting me become a friend of his sister and thus one to be welcomed at his home."

"I don't think that", the girl said in a low tone.

He took a short step nearer to her, looking down at her slightly bowed head.

"From the time on the mine road up there on the Hill—you've been the one and only girl" and while he spoke gently and smiled, there was a tenseness to his jaw. "You are the realization of all my dreams of the ideal woman. When I was unworthy even to think of you, you were the influence that was impelling me towards my best. You are my best influence now. I've tried to climb up to you from the very depths. Up there in the mountains—I can't tell you what I want to say about what the thought of you meant to me in those days. I worked early and late—even in an irrigation ditch—to

get money for a grubstake, so I could go into the hills. Why—the dreaming and the hoping even made it possible for me to state my mining plans boldly to a banker in his own private office and your kindly influence must have been with me and for me, because he listened to me and favored my request."

She looked up at him.

"Mr. Bradshaw, I indeed feel I owe you a great debt of gratitude"—but he would not let her proceed.

I know what you want to say, but I cannot listen to your telling me you owe me anything, when it is all so much the other way around, and I owe everything to you."

"But you are successful", she said. "You have arrived at where you more than ever are assured of your place in the world, not only because of your mining success, but because of your wonderful mine cage invention."

In his masculine blindness he did not realize that the girl was clinging to that great and wonderful attribute with which womankind blesses man—the never wearying desire to give her best thought to him, to give him actual aid. It is the mother instinct. Had he come to her the same clean and upright man he was, but having recently failed to win success or having been disappointed in some great and, to him, vital enterprise, she might have yielded on the instant to his entreaty so that she could confer her womanly solace on him, take him within the shelter of her arms as a woman does a bruised, hurt boy, and re-inspire him. The man, in the full vigor of his fighting strength and strong mentality, likes to go forth to fight in life's battles for the woman he loves—he wants to be the provider, the killer of deer for her. But what of his vaunted strength and his mentality when his spirit weakens, when his courage falters

and he is confused by the rebuffs of the world? Then the faith of the woman revives him, just as her soft hands minister to him, and he goes forth again to fight the good fight, stimulated and hopeful.

So it was that this girl wanted to know, to find out what she thought it her womanly right to know—Would this man who, with the thought of her, as he said, to inspire him, had won his way up out of the depths—would he still need her as an inspiration, was she still so vital to him?

And then he stumbled blindly, but happily into the right course.

"It was to win your approval that I have worked up to what you say is something of a worthy success", he said. "I loved you that day up on the mine road, and ever since you have become more and more precious to me. I can't tell you how much you've been in my thoughts. Why the M. N. mine is named for you—those letters mean Mary Norton. I need you more than ever. Do you want to send me out to keep on alone and so undo all the good you have done for me?" Then suddenly. "Will you marry me?"

The girl arose, and there was that in her eyes that made him want to take her in his arms and crush her to him, to try to compel her love that way if no other.

"I won't say it—it is so sudden. I—" she hesitated.

And because he was very much a man, he remained standing just as he was, instead of doing as every fiber in him prompted.

"Listen, Mary Norton", he said with half-smiling tenderness, "if I had not had to come here to surprise and perhaps shock you with what I had to say of myself, and make it all appear so strange to you, I know you would have told me before I left here, just what is in your

heart concerning me—whether it would be yes or no, but I won't ask for your answer right now. I want you to think of what I have said and I am coming tomorrow for what you will tell me, Mary."

He spoke her name so softly she scarcely heard it, and he resolutely turned from her, for the ineffable sweetness of the girl, the look in her eyes and the almost wistful smile on her lips nearly made him cast aside all his restraint.

But he did not come on the morrow, much as at that moment he really thought he would.

CHAPTER XXX

CRUNCH PAYS

At Carty's saloon, Vignon leaned against the bar and snarled his protests against humanity in general and certain individuals in particular, while Wilkins, scowling as ever, had to bear the brunt of "Red Mike's" talk.

"They're all no good", Vignon was declaring. "Bradshaw, damín four-flusher, is wurs' en any of 'em. I'll git that guy en git 'im good—I'll git 'im good."

"Wen yuh ketch 'im", said Wilkins sneeringly.

"Yeh, when I ketch 'im."

Carty, walking behind the bar, stopped opposite them.

"Lissen here you two", he commanded. "Git away from this bar. Get me?"

Vignon leered at him.

"That's what I said", Carty continued, pointing a finger straight at Vignon. "You go", he ordered.

"I'll git you too", muttered Vignon, but he turned away from the bar, as did Wilkins.

"In a minute I'll kick you out of here", Carty shouted after them, and various men in the place turned to look at the slouching Vignon, and to such a status had he fallen that among all there not one so low as would do him homage.

"I 'spose yuh'll wait till yuh ketch Carty, too", Wilkins said in his sneering way as Vignon and he dropped

into chairs at a table against the wall opposite the bar and away from the other tables.

"Say, you bum", growled Vignon, directing his displeasure at his henchman, "yer gittin' th' fresh habit too. Keep it up, just keep it up is all I ask, en see what happens."

"Luk here, Vignon", returned the other, striking the table with his fist and showing more spirit toward "Red Mike" than ever he would have dared in prior times, "I seen yuh show th' yellah streak—Bradshaw made yuh show it. A guy wid a yellah streak can't han' nawthin' tuh me. Ev'rybody is on tuh yuh now. I'm tryin' tuh tell yuh fer yer own good."

Vignon half rose from his chair.

"Why you bum, you—say I got a good mind to teach you a lessin."

"Yeh an' yuh got a good mind not tuh, too", said Wilkins in no wise perturbed, and the other sank back on his chair.

At this moment came a diversion in the approach of Crunch. The new suit which Walton recently had bought for him was in sad condition, and he had only a few dollars left of the last remittance Bradshaw had sent him by the newspaperman.

Vignon broke into a coarse laugh and hailed Crunch with sarcastic tone.

"Ha—here's ol' 'len' me yer ears'. Say ol' 'len' me yer ears; goin' to treat today?"

Crunch fixed him with serious eye and replied with haughty demeanor.

"I don't treat with one of your ilk."

"My what?" demanded Vignon.

"Your ilk."

"I'll ilk you", bellowed Vignon throwing himself on

Crunch, who, with utterly unlooked for agility and no lack of courage, tried to fight back. But Vignon's very bulk bore him to the floor and Crunch was in fair way of being badly pounded had not Wilkins, deciding to enter the combat, struck at Vignon. "Red Mike" swung at Wilkins and, in the ensuing mêlée, Vignon, Wilkins and Crunch rolled on the floor together, while the other patrons in the saloon formed a hasty circle about them.

The experienced Carty ran to the door and blew shrilly on a police whistle. Then he hastened to the combatants and endeavored to pacify them with rough kicks and emphatic words. His way was effective, for the fighting had practically come to an end when two policemen arrived, and only feelings were being injured by the unabated fire-edged repartee that was flying back and forth between the recent warriors.

The police took charge of the situation and of Vignon, Crunch and Wilkins.

"Run 'em all in—do 'em good", said Carty to one of the guardians of the peace, who was guarding the prisoners, while the other one was ringing for the police patrol, and the diplomatic Carty handed the policeman two cigars from a box he kept in his safe.

Soon Vignon, Wilkins and Crunch were hurried into the police patrol automobile, which had been backed up to the saloon and, amid the buzzing of the curious who had gathered, could be heard various bits of humorous advice to the arrested trio.

Arrived at the city jail, the three were perfunctorily searched, Vignon's empty revolver holster being unbuckled and deposited to his credit against the time when he might emerge from durance vile, as was the case with the small amount of money taken from Wilkins and Crunch, but the object which Vignon had slipped un-

seen beneath his shirt, while still in the patrol auto, went with him to the cell in which he was sequestered.

In police court next morning, each of the three was fined fifteen dollars with the alternative of serving out the decree in jail at the rate of three dollars per day, and perforce each took the alternative.

Crunch thought of telephoning to Walton, but he felt ashamed, for this was his first time in jail and so he decided not to let the newspaperman know of his predicament, preferring to take his medicine like a man.

During the ensuing five days, Vignon frequently expressed his hatred to Crunch who occupied the adjoining cell with Wilkins and brooded on what, to his distorted view, appeared as rank injustice. And as often the case with such a one, he could not proceed to anything like an analytical consideration of cause and effect, of personal action and result, but only could jump to the conclusion that some one, not himself, some person with malice aforethought and diabolical ingenuity and persistent and revengeful purpose had brought him to what he was—he, the man whom so many had feared and of whom he had been by way of being a leader. He to have been arrested and imprisoned because of a saloon brawl! And who could that one be who thus had wanted and plotted and accomplished his ruin? Bradshaw! So ran his distorted thoughts. That by some Machiavelian means Bradshaw even had caused such devoted admirers as Wilkins and Snitch to fall away from him, Vignon felt sure.

Crunch had not seen Bradshaw since the night of the League's last meeting, but in recent months he had come to know from Walton that it was Dan who supplied much of the money that the newspaperman handed over to him as remittances. So, when Vignon in the next cell kept

uttering his threats against Bradshaw, Crunch was led to believe that Vignon knew where he could find Dan, and it set Crunch to thinking.

Vignon, Wilkins and Crunch finished serving their sentences on an afternoon.

From jail Wilkins went at once to Carty's.

Vignon stood undecided at the corner of the alley leading to the outside door of the jail office, and there was no abatement of the anger that was burning in his mind, that was so fierce that it seemed almost physically to be consuming him.

Crunch was standing on the curb not far away, but unobserved by Vignon. Watching closely, he saw Vignon reach inside his shirt, half-withdraw an object at which he glanced quickly and replace it.

A policeman stepped into the alley from the jail office and Vignon slouched along towards the heart of the business district.

Vignon continued his slouching way. He went as would have one of the "unclean" of olden times, as if every man were his enemy and eyeing him with direct suspicion.

Not far ahead loomed the newspaper office where was Walton's place of work.

Crunch followed along not far behind.

* * * * *

Bradshaw, his heart and mind full of his talk with Mary, walked the distance from the Norton home to Walton's office.

"Ho—back from your private business affairs, my hearty!" exclaimed the newspaperman, lolling back in his chair. "Sit down a minute, Daniel, until I've finished reading some of this proof, and then I'm yours."

"And now", said Walton in a few minutes, "I am at

your services. What do you say to a walk over to the rooms and a pleasant, cool rest there until supper time, and then a ride out to Columbia Gardens?"

"Suits me just right", answered Bradshaw. "I've been wanting to talk to you, too, about that new book of yours."

"Haven't been thinking so much of it lately", Walton said. "Truth of the matter, Dan, is that I want to have a talk over at the rooms with you regarding a proposition that has come to me—well, somewhat indirectly so far, but, in fact, I heard some more about it this afternoon while you were out. It has to do with an appointment to a governmental position of real importance. Seems the governor has the recommending of it. May have some international phase—in fact, I understand it means connection with a commission that is to take up some important work.

"Great!" exclaimed Bradshaw. "I certainly would regret your leaving here, John, but if there is something of that importance in sight, then go, and my blessings with you."

"But I haven't been offered the appointment yet", said Walton with a laugh. "It's merely a vague notion so far, rash one—and yet", he spoke more seriously, "a chance to get into the diplomatic service is something I've always had a hankering for, and this kind of an appointment might pave the way to it for me."

"Sure thing", agreed Bradshaw. "Get yourself appointed in time to some sunny little island in the South Seas, which is like a summer paradise the year around. You live in a charming bungalow all fixed up in romantic style, the bungalow not you, and attired in spick and span white suit, you not the bungalow, and with an American flag over the door, showing you are the Amer-

ican consul. Then I come along and pester you with demands that you send messages to the United States for me and listen to your stories of adventure and romance and all that while the cerulean sea curls lazily up on the snow-white sand, or whatever kind of sea it is down there that does something like that—and then you show me the new novels you have written in your leisure moments and"—

"And you", interrupted Walton rising, "are running away with yourself. You are indeed a man of vast imagination, Daniel."

"Have to be these days to get anywhere", remarked Bradshaw.

* * * * *

Vignon looked like a man who had spent five days in jail. He was unkempt. Bits of straw from his bunk still were in his hair. He looked as evil as he was, and he had the furtive glance of one who mistrusts his fellow-men. A snarl was on his lips. His bloodshot eyes were hot with the anger burning in him. He hated the people. He hated the city which, he decided in his peculiar egotism, had repudiated him. He hated the signs of industry and prosperity and progress he saw all about him. He was the very incarnation of the spirit of unreasoning, maddened, anarchistic Direct Actionism. He was galled by the realization that, in truth, the world did not want him—the inciter to riot, the preacher of disturbance, the advocate of anarchism. Five years before, he had been a strong and earnest man, a first class miner, proud of that and proud of his strength. Time had been, too, when he had felt a little pride in his attire—that was when he was a strong, well-balanced man.

He looked down at his form. What rags and tatters

covered him! The very taint of jail atmosphere was still on him!

He was an outcast—the symbol of Hatred, blind Fury, destructive, repelling and unworthy; repudiated by Industry, by Progress and by himself!

Vignon let his hand go tremblingly down his ragged coat front and all at once he straightened up somewhat, as he touched the handle of the bulldog revolver hidden in his shirt.

* * * * *

Bradshaw and Walton paused to read the bulletins in front of the newspaper building, and then went on their way to Walton's rooms.

When they were near the arched portal of the apartment building, a slouching figure came along, keeping close to the wall. Neither Bradshaw nor Walton heeded it, for Crunch, coming directly to them from across the street, had attracted their notice. They stopped to watch him, but he was not then looking at them—his gaze was directed beyond them a few paces, to where Vignon had arrived between them and the building's entrance.

Vignon, his glowering eyes on Bradshaw as if fascinated and yet fearing that his sight of Dan was but an hallucination of his fevered brain, drew the bulldog revolver from its hiding place and pointed it at the man he considered the worst of all his enemies.

It all happened so quickly that, with the exception of Crunch, who, in a way had been prepared for it, the few others near at hand did not know what to do before the drama staged by Vignon had ended.

Bradshaw, noting Crunch's horrified look past him, turned to see Vignon leveling the weapon at his head, and Vignon pressed the trigger the very instant that

Crunch hurled himself forward, just managing to strike the revolver aside.

Frenzied, the madman turned the weapon towards Crunch and shot him through the heart. The next moment, Vignon fell from a crushing blow on the head delivered by the club of a quickly-arrived policeman.

Men came running from various directions, while women drew away terror-stricken, intent on the fallen figures of Crunch and Vignon—all but Walton.

Unnoticed for the moment even by Bradshaw, who thought the newspaperman beside or close behind him as he bent over Crunch, Walton sank back against a pillar of the portal, wavering unsteadily and looking straight ahead with very wide and very surprised eyes. He was ashen white; pressed close to his side he held a hand, a thin, crimson stain spreading over his coat from beneath his fingers.

Then Bradshaw saw what had happened and, paralyzed for only the interval of a heart beat, he sprang to Walton and caught him in his arms just as the newspaperman collapsed.

CHAPTER XXXI

MARY

Up and down the cement floor of the cool, methodically arranged sub-dispensing room, Bradshaw paced. Every nerve in him was alive with its keenest tension. His nervous excitement made him tremble inwardly until it was almost exhausting.

The coming to the hospital; the hurried arrangements that had followed—in all that time he had acted with a remarkable coolness and certainty, and yet now the affair and its details seemed like a dream.

In the operating room, on the other side of the bottle-lined wall, white-garbed and turbaned hospital surgeons were working over Walton. And while in the room there was a quiet that was like a holiness, Bradshaw knew that many had come crowding to the main entrance of the big institution and that members of Walton's newspaper staff had penetrated as far as the reception rooms. Only Bradshaw had been permitted to accompany the stretcher, on which Walton was carried, into the inner recesses of the building and to the operating room.

A dark stain was on Bradshaw's coat and, as he passed in his slow pacing close to a window, he noticed it for the first time. He touched it. It was blood—Walton's. He stood there with his fingers pressing that damp spot and through his mind ran many thoughts of

what had happened—and what might come. He had wanted to go into the operating room with the alert, quick-stepping and calmly businesslike surgeons, but the chief of them had kindly but firmly asked him not to do so. But before the final half of the double doors, that opened from corridor to operating room, had been closed, Bradshaw had glimpsed a motionless figure outstretched on the operating table and the pungent odor of the anaesthetic had come to him. Then that half of the doors had been closed quickly and noiselessly, shutting off the view, but the smell of ether remained with him, almost sickeningly sweet, menacing and yet fraught with promise too.

While to Bradshaw it seemed that hours had passed since those folding doors had been closed, in truth it had been scarcely half an hour—and the details of the affair, most of them exaggerated, were beginning to circulate through the city.

Bradshaw thought of that last glimpse of Vignon—Vignon leveling a squat, wicked-looking revolver at his head, and his eyes venomous; of Crunch springing forward and then reeling back from the force of the bullet that pierced him. Why—Crunch had saved his life! Bradshaw looked out through the window with unseeing eyes. It had been meant that he should be where Walton now was! He pictured in his mind what might have resulted had the bullet, the cause of Walton's condition, gone to its intended mark and he, Bradshaw, was the one in there on that operating table—or on the long, white marble slab at some morgue. What would it all have meant to Her? What if Walton died—for him—?

A movement at the door made him turn, for he thought one of the gentle Sisters was there. But he was wrong. Mary Norton stood supporting herself against

a side of the doorway and looking at him with wide, questioning eyes. The Sister who had conducted her there, already was moving into the next corridor.

His surprise held him momentarily mute and motionless and then quickly he went to her and took her in his arms while she clung to him.

"Dan—they said it was you—that was what I was told—and I came as fast as I could—they wouldn't let me come up here at first, and then they said it wasn't you, but I made them let me come—they just had to let me come to see for myself", she was half whispering in the quick, appealing way of a woman mortally in fear.

The thought came to him like a thrust that she had come overwrought with the idea that he, perhaps, had been fatally hurt, and finding him well and strong might have made her mistake her true feeling for him in that moment of reaction. So he gently took his arms from about her as if to put her from him, but she looked frankly up at him though seemingly a little bewildered as might a child have been.

"Why—why Dan—was I wrong in coming here?—Don't you—", and she paused.

He was looking deep down into her wide open eyes that were like bottomless, Heaven-reflecting pools. Almost fiercely he drew her close to him again and bent his head and kissed her as a man kisses a woman whose love he holds and to whom he gives a love that sanctifies him. Tears came involuntarily to the eyes of this strong man and he felt shamed that he had doubted her even for a moment after she had come so to find the truth.

"Dan", she whispered, "a Sister brought me here and she must be out there in the corridor". She drew gently away from him to see. But the corridor was silent, and empty—no Sister of Charity was there. Then came a

stirring about in the operating room and Bradshaw stepped into the corridor beside the girl.

Holding her hand firmly in his, they awaited the opening of the double doors.

Walton did not die. Nor did he even go perilously near the brink of the silently flowing river in the shadowy valley. The bullet had been deflected by a rib and had buried itself in the flesh under his right arm, from which it had been easily extracted. A few hours later, when he had come from under the influence of the anaesthetic, he told Bradshaw that he did not know what had made him the more sick—the shock of the bullet or the ether.

“Also, I am going back to my rooms in the morning”, he declared, a decision which his physician promptly countermanded with the statement that he would have to remain in the hospital for about a week. And that, the newspaperman was inclined to resent, for, like all strong men, he had that boyish impatience when it came to having, perforce, to remain in bed even for a limited time that made him almost peevish, until Bradshaw informed him of the new happiness that had come to him and Mary Norton, whereupon Walton, with genuine delight, averred that the news did him more good than could all the medical skill in the world.

“Bless you, my boy, bless you!” he exclaimed to Bradshaw. “It is just as I wanted it to be. You certainly don’t deserve her—but then, no man half deserves any good woman.”

Before Walton left the hospital to return to his apartments, Bradshaw spoke to him of Vignon and of how Crunch had been done to his death.

“I gave Crunch decent burial and if he left any rela-

tives, I'll do what I can for them. Poor Crunch—no more Shakespeare from him."

Another week and Walton was able to be present at the Norton home as the guest of honor of a family dinner there. It was in truth a happy gathering.

"What do you think of this proposition of Dan coming in here and planning to take my greatest treasure from me in such a short time?" Norton laughingly asked Walton.

"He's always been a rather impetuous and certainly lucky young man", rejoined the other.

"Anyhow it all comes of my being away from town", Norton went on in his good-natured way. "All I had to do was to go to Anaconda for one day and then get back at night to find you, Walton, had tried to shuffle off this mortal coil and frighten your friends to death and be informed that one, Dan Bradshaw, had usurped the place of my friend, D. Williams, and not content with that had appropriated my sister. But I will say that always having had a real liking for Dan Bradshaw and also for D. Williams, I indeed am twice as fond of the man who combines them both."

Before he left that evening, Walton heard from Mary that she had written the details of his injury as well as her other important news to Margaret Hanlon, sojourning in Hawaii, who, according to her most recent letter to Mary, had said she might go on to Japan.

"I should have an answer from her before so very long", Mary concluded with that womanly ability to say casually that which was of important concern to the man listener and which she well knew would bring him comfort.

Therefore, when Bradshaw came to her not long after with the information that to Walton had been tendered

the appointment as a member of the governmental commission of which she knew, and he exclaimed that he did not know why Walton was so hesitant about accepting it, Mary smiled.

"I know you are a wonderful man, Dan Bradshaw", she said, "but there are some things no mere man can quite understand", with which cryptic statement he had to be satisfied until she was ready to explain the specific intent of her words.

That explanation did not come until a week later, after Mary had received a letter from Margaret corroborating the vague rumor Mary had heard to the effect that Margaret had been wooed and won by Mr. Arthur Eugene Welling of New York, able son of an able father and owner of the great Welling steel works.

Walton was standing at one of his office windows watching the forming of storm clouds when Bradshaw came to see him the afternoon of the day that Mary received Margaret's letter, to tell him of the news that had come from Honolulu.

Walton remained silent, watching the brewing storm, and then when the clouds looked the darkest there came a little rift in them and a long, golden pathway of sunlight streamed through.

Presently the newspaperman turned from the window.

"Dan, I am trying to frame up a telegram accepting that appointment", he remarked in his quietest way. But Dan did not fail to detect in the other's tone the fierce struggle that was taking place in Walton's heart. Still, he knew that through Walton's mastery of himself, he would come out victorious.

Late that night, Bradshaw went to Walton's rooms and found the newspaperman comfortable in dressing

robe seated before his unlighted grate, with all lights out but the glow of the shaded library lamp, smoking his pipe.

Occupying his accustomed deep chair opposite Walton and with pipe going, fleecy white tobacco clouds wreathing above them, Bradshaw gave his friend that manner of sincere sympathy which one man knows how to extend to another without the formality of words.

"One more month and you will be a Benedict and I will be on my way east", said Walton, and paused a moment. "Dan, my Lad, it's all been like a play—and what a wonderful, what a virile play!"

"As Crunch might have paraphrased it—It indeed is a fact that we live to find the world's all a stage", and Bradshaw watched the smoke curls drifting lazily upward. "By the way, John, I saw the superintendent of the prison hospital this evening and he told me of Vignon's death."

Neither one spoke for a few moments, and they puffed at their pipes.

"Some great talks we've had in this place", remarked Bradshaw.

"Dan, I hate to think of giving up these rooms", said Walton. "They are like a part of us. And when you came in I was thinking, too, of other things I will miss—There is that view from the veranda of 'Mountain View'. I'll often think of the mountains so deep blue in the evening and the heavens above them so pink. Somehow that will make me seem there with you again, for we all like your mountains in the same way—we who know them."

"It isn't the end of the play, John—not at all", declared Bradshaw. "Why—the play is just beginning." He drew meditatively at his pipe for a moment and when he spoke it was softly. "But Oh, John, my friend, what

a thrilling and a wonderful and an inspiring prologue it has been."

That same evening, Norton brought home startling news.

Tharny had decamped. Creditors by the score were left mourning. A Federal agent was going over Tharny's stock promotions for within the past few days, Tharny had made a desperately bold effort to defraud a broker and the authorities had been put on his trail.

"Good riddance—though the scamp should be in the penitentiary," declared Norton. And he wondered at the warmth with which his sister kissed him.

* * * * *

A most beautiful day of all Indian Summer, it seemed to Bradshaw, as he sat on a ledge of the big boulder that made a throne for the girl at his side and a little above him. And while she, too, saw the beauty of the mountain scenery before and below them, which then was holding his gaze, she frequently glanced at him with a smile that was all tenderness and pride, and a mist of happy tears came before her eyes. He was in his mountain costume, his blue flannel shirt open at his strong, bronzed neck, as he liked best to have it; his hat on the turf beside him.

For many miles, the valley stretched away in delightful panorama. On either hand the mountains swung out in semicircular form. High up on the ridges were heavy snow banks, but below the snow-line, the charm of Indian Summer held sway.

Bradshaw and his wife had ridden to this favorite place from "Mountain View", while DeWitt Norton had gone to the lower camp to inspect with Paddy Skiff and Jackson the great new hoisting plant there.

Norton, Paddy, Jackson and the foreman stepped on the cage and the foreman signaled for the descent. Faster and faster the long cable played out. Suddenly the cage lurched. There came a whirring noise and the cage rocked and began to plunge towards the sump.

"My God—the bolt's broke—we're dropping!" cried out the foreman.

But even as he spoke, there came an intermittent grinding noise, a quivering of the cage and its speed began to be checked. It slowed—there was no cessation of the grinding noise now—and then the cage stopped.

It was almost opposite the big doors of a level and Paddy Skiff hastily opening the cage doors, rapped on the other doors until they were unbarred and drawn back, the cage's occupants quickly climbing to the level.

The foreman sank down on a timber as though exhausted. Paddy Skiff wiped the sweat from his forehead, and Jackson spat out a tooth that the clinching of his jaws had broken.

Norton drew a very deep breath, and even in that light the men, clustering about the saved ones, could see that he was very pale. Then Norton smiled a little and said coolly, "Bradshaw's safety-clutch works fine—we'll all say that!"

And at that moment, Bradshaw was looking smilingly at his wife as he lifted himself to a place beside her.

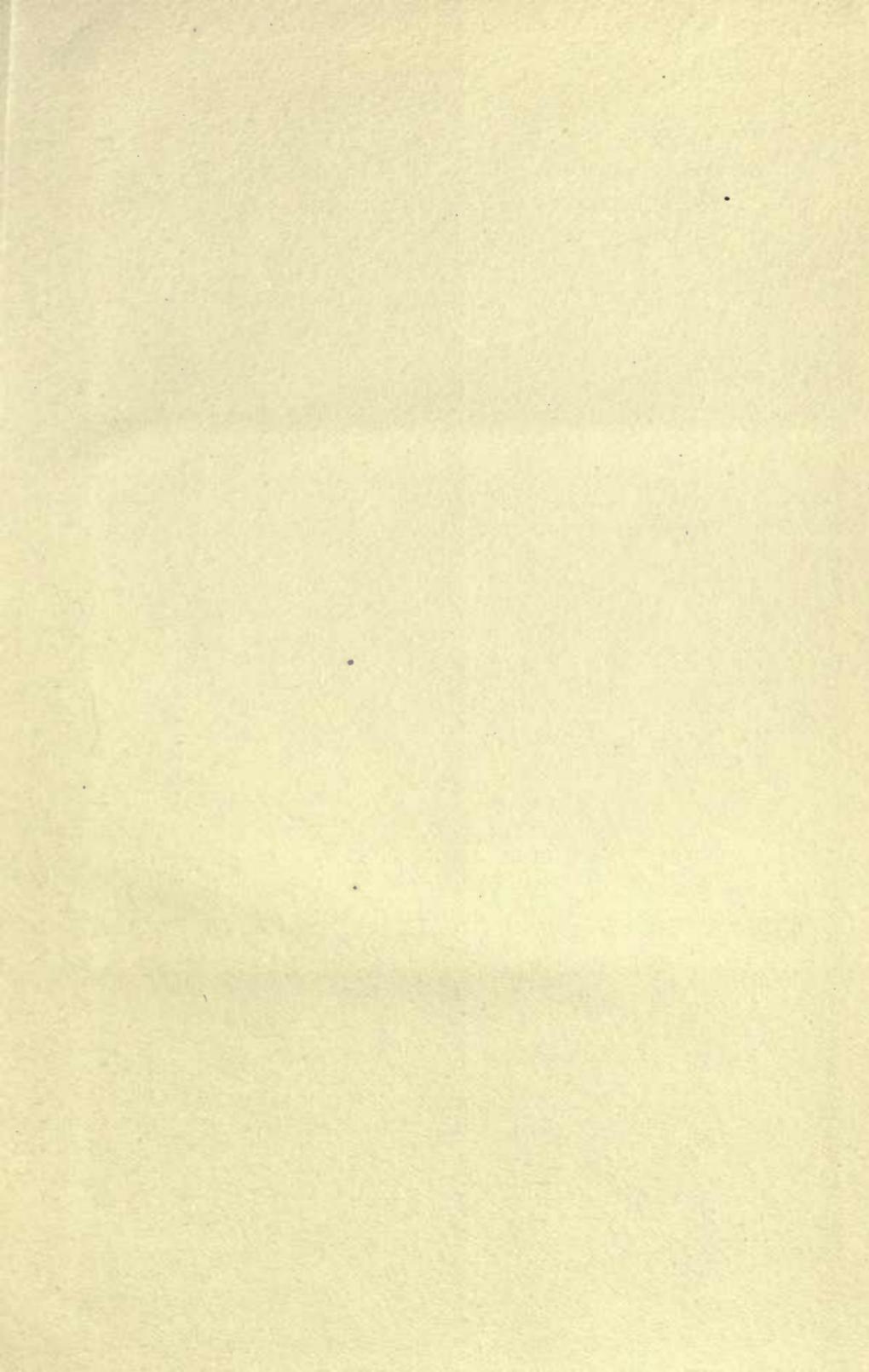
"Look, dearest", he said pointing to the mountains across the broad valley.

The foothills were already in shadowy indistinctness and it was not as if only the shade of coming evening had made its way up the mountain grades, but as if a wide-spreading brightness had risen, ever risen out of the depths, up and ever up to the great, shining ridges on

the summit that now was bathed in golden sunlight and looked marvelously massive and strong and sure.

The mountain man's head was erect, the blood throbbed through his veins and the look of him was good and wholesome. While the great, shining summit across the valley still held his gaze, he placed his arm tenderly about the waist of his wife. And so he, too, would be—strong, sure and brave out in life's sunlight—a light the more glorious because of her sweet companionship and abiding faith in him.

THE END



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